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Development of Intercultural Competence and Cultural Empathy in High School Students
Participating in a Short-Term Study Abroad Exchange

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the
College of Education and Social Work
West Chester University
West Chester, Pennsylvania

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of
Doctor of Education

By

Jeffrey Mapes

May 2020

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family. My wife, Lori, has been incredibly supportive throughout this entire process. Despite the amount of time that I had to dedicate to this endeavor, Lori found ways to make life easy for me, including by planning a perfect wedding while I completed my research and prepared to write this dissertation. In the moments where I questioned my ability to complete this endeavor, Lori always reassured me and gave me the confidence that I needed. I look forward to the time I get to spend with her now that this process is all done. My dad, Bruce, played a major role in this journey, even before it started. I could not have asked for a better father who always knew how to push me, but also how to console and inspire me when I needed it. From the ski slopes to this dissertation, he has always been my biggest fan. I would not be where I am today without my brother, Rob. Being nine years younger than Rob, I have always looked to him as my role model. He's always been the person that can teach me what I need to know. The Holy Cross guys, Brendan, Denny, Fos, Luke, Dugan, Fran, and Toby, have been tremendous sources of support since we met 15 years ago, and have also inspired me through their accomplishments. Lastly, and certainly not least, my mom, Mary Helen, and my stepmother, Karen, have been looking down on me and guiding me throughout this entire process. I miss them dearly, but I know that their love still supports me today.

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Abstract

A major effect of globalization is the decreasing importance of national borders in favor of international economic cooperation. However, many of the issues of the imperialist era of the 16th to the 20th centuries still linger including poverty and marginalized populations of people. A space in schools exists for programs that have an ability to engage students in critical thought through cultural empathy and also prepare students for the modern, interconnected world. When education policymakers attend too much to standardized testing, school curricula do not tend to have options for such critical and empathic education. Through opportunities such as Short-Term Study Abroad (STSA) programs, educators can help to develop intercultural competence among participants. In this dissertation, I investigated the relationship between participation in a 10-day secondary school STSA exchange program to Denmark, and student intercultural competence development. Using Mezirow's (1997) Transformative Learning Theory as a theoretical framework, I utilized a mixed methods approach in order to measure changes in participants' intercultural competence before and after participation the exchange. Through this study, I found that high school who participated in a carefully-structured secondary school STSA exchange program experienced significant development in their intercultural competence. Students who took part in this program had opportunities to process cultural differences in meaningful ways and engaged in critical thought through interventions such as journal reflections and group interviews. This dissertation offers several suggestions for implementing successful STSA programs at the high school level.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Education should not limit itself to what new knowledge one acquires, but rather should include the realization as to how little one actually knows as this understanding empowers individuals to open their eyes to a world beyond their awareness. Students who take part in exchange programs have opportunities for enlightenment as these programs can force them to consider how life beyond their own works under different pretenses of success and failure. These opportunities also broaden their understanding to connect with others of differing backgrounds. A former student who participated in this study's Danish Exchange Program two years prior to this research had the following to say about her overseas experience:

Culture is something we identify ourselves with. It's different for every person, but when it comes down to it, are we really that different? Through the exchange, I have seen several differences in culture, lifestyle, personality, and so much more. Yet, looking closer at my Danish friends and their lives, we don't differ significantly. We are all teenagers trying to find who we are in this world and what we want to do. We have drama, friendships, disputes, fun, love, upsets, and everything that comes along with life. I have thus come to the conclusion that people may differ in culture and traditions, but when it comes down to it, we're just people. (District Danish Exchange Program)

This student's reflection displays an attempt by her to understand her place in this world. Through her exposure to and interaction with students her age from Denmark, she developed an appreciation for differences and similarities.

Through her experience in Denmark, the above student uncovered an ability to understand a culture different from her own through listening to people of that culture share their own stories and insights. Unfortunately, attitudes in Western society have not always reflected

this student's humility. The eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries saw the expansion of Western powers into Africa, Asia, and Latin America (Young, 2001). Colonized populations viewed Imperialism with contempt as they saw their lives forcibly change in order to accommodate European culture. Sowell (1998) illustrated this accommodation of European culture when he stated that "as a result of conquests, the Western Hemisphere is today a larger region of European civilization than Europe itself" (p. 3). Considering these negative effects of imperialism, proponents of globalized education seek to help students become agents of change at home and abroad.

Marginalization

During the Imperial Age, European nations and the United States advanced their own agendas despite the ill effects these policies had on the native inhabitants of colonized lands (Schweinitz, 1983; Young, 2001). Millions of people living in lands conquered by Europeans found their cultures no longer acceptable in the eyes of their colonial rulers, and as a result lost their place in conversations regarding their futures (Osterhammel, 2005; Young, 2001). Osterhammel (2005) noted that colonizers refused "cultural synthesis" or to make "cultural concessions" for the people that came under their rule (pp. 15-16). Most often, subjugation came at the hands of excessive and disproportionate violence (Schweinitz, 1983; Sowell, 1998). Marginalized people of diverse backgrounds have had more recent opportunities to find their voices in the globalized world, but now social class has replaced national and ethnic boundaries as a source of marginalized populations.

Imperialism's Effects

Imperialism's ill effects did not end with marginalized people's independence and emancipation as the world still suffers from the expansion of Western powers (Sowell, 1998).

The legacy of the Imperial era of the eighteenth through twentieth centuries left people around the world feeling as though their colonial overlords effectively silenced their voices. Young (2001) described how European imperialists stated that indigenous populations would benefit from European influence, which led to forced adoption of imperialist culture, worldviews, knowledge, and economic systems. These ideals stripped people of their own identity and agency (Cary & Mutua, 2010). People back in imperial homelands often developed false perceptions of indigenous identities as a result of interactions with other cultures (Bayly, 1999; Morgan, 1999). By constructing negative perceptions of colonized populations, colonial authorities could control how their citizens at home viewed these people of far-away lands. Bayly (1999) described how conflicts in colonial lands led to “fierce debates about the barbarity of ‘heathen races’ which took on a common pattern and served a similar role in the official mind” (p. 33). Such a system led to intolerance as Europeans justified their expansion activities by developing negative stereotypes which enhanced the perception that the subjugated people of Africa, Asia, and Latin America needed Western help. As these suppressed populations reasserted their citizenship based on common histories, geographies, and ethnicities rather than as subjects of foreign powers, nationalist feelings strengthened in order to return voices to the silenced (Gaudelli, 2009; Trifonas, 2009) and critique the social structures created by years of oppression (Young, 2001). Unfortunately, those years of oppression created modern issues such as the global immigration crisis (Connor, 2016)

Globalization in the Postcolonial World: Cooperation and Conflict

The postcolonial world offers opportunities for suppressed populations to challenge the social structures which marginalized indigenous populations during the Imperial era (Young, 2001) as these structures left former colonies unable to adjust without issue after their imperial

overlords departed (Schweinitz, 1983). The critiquing spirit brought on by emancipation of imperial holdings offers a framework to challenge current areas of inequality. As our society continues to transition from the twentieth century into the twenty-first century, the traditional notion of nation and citizenship progresses as well. Despite nationalist movements creating independent nations in Africa and Asia, globalization fosters the growth of an interdependent world. National boundaries exert less of an influence on concepts of citizenship than they did during the Imperial Period when jingoism routinely sparked competition and conflict among nations (Young, 2001). The interconnectedness though of modern industry, business, and politics has pushed world leaders to require international cooperation in the place of national competition (Gaudelli, 2009; Trifonas, 2009). With international cooperation, government leaders will hopefully avoid conflict in the name of national interest.

Despite the optimism some leaders have regarding a borderless world, populations of marginalized people who suffer as a result of the effects of others' actions still exist in the twenty-first century. Globalization has created new boundaries separating people, and the world has yet to adjust to these new demarcations (Trifonas, 2009). National and ethnic based citizenship has transitioned towards economic class differentiation, and understanding this new sense of citizenship requires people and governments to have a high degree of international social responsibility (Gaudelli, 2009; Moffa, 2016). Many government officials and business leaders around the world who promulgate the positive aspects of globalization often ignore people who feel that they have seen their opportunities diminish while someone else benefits (Klein, 2016; Sorkin, 2017). Some political theorists have even argued that while many government leaders claim globalization has erased national borders, Nationalism's ill-effects remain such as hegemonic practices of nation states (Behdad, 2006).

Globalized Education

Proponents of globalized education seek to foster in students an understanding of the world around them. Education policy-makers who utilize the nationalized form of this education encourage competition between nations whereas those policy-makers who use the internationalized version inspire a new worldview where people work towards ends that provide universal and globalized benefits. If structured improperly, school curriculum can fail students by not creating an awareness of the needs of those who may feel marginalized or without a voice in world affairs. Internationalized education can help encourage social action and provides empowerment opportunities for those who may not have previously had such prospects for success.

Toward a New Worldview

Currently, people around the world work to find new ways of defining citizenship and assigning responsibility for helping those who have yet to share in the benefits of globalization. Individuals involved in business and government seem to benefit the most from globalization (Guadelli, 2009). Regardless of viewpoint, those people who have not found success in the current geopolitical system join a line of history's disenfranchised populations (Klein, 2016). Internationalized education in schools can help to educate students' worldviews in order to create greater awareness of the diversity and issues our world faces and to encourage assistance for those unable to benefit from globalization's prosperity (Sklad et al., 2016).

Worth the Risk?

According to Frey and Whitehead (2009), "Economic competition and development are cited most often as a reason to expand international education in the US" (p. 275). Proponents of international education also rationalize its employment by citing national (Frey & Whitehead,

2009). Changing education for these purposes does not come without precedence as the United States has a history of adjusting education initiatives based on perceived threats posed by other countries. The launching of Sputnik and the *A Nation At Risk* report provide evidence of such adjustments. For decades following these events, presidents and their administrative teams advocated for agendas which focused on achievement scores rather than critical thinking skills. Politicians often implemented these agendas following events the United States government deemed threatening to national interests.

Turning Points. On October 4, 1957, the Soviet Union launched the Sputnik, a satellite that circled the Earth for a few days (Garber, 2007). This moment inspired transformation in American education as Congress passed 1958's Defense Education Act. This law increased school funding so that the United States did not become economically or militarily inferior to the Soviet Union (Powell, 2007). Similarly, 1983's *A Nation At Risk* once again alerted the American people of the economic dangers of falling behind the rest of the world academically (Ansary, 2007). Because of President Reagan's landmark education report, politicians came to view standardized testing as their preferred method of monitoring school progress because of the speed and efficiency at which they could receive and analyze data (Batt, 2013). These two events pushed education in the United States to a nationalized form focused on defeating international competition, not developing students into empathic citizens.

Presidential Responses. Subsequent presidential administrations of both major political parties in the United States followed the lead of the Reagan administration. In 1989, George H.W. Bush convened an education summit that developed goals for educational standards. Bush's America 2000 initiative paved the way for Bill Clinton's Goals 2000: Educate America Act that continued government support for standardized testing as a means of measuring student

achievement. George W. Bush continued the trend with his signature No Child Left Behind Act that emphasized standardized test results as a means of measuring teacher effectiveness.

Following his predecessors, Barack Obama developed 2009's Race to the Top program to further support standardize testing and 2015's Every Student Succeeds Act to continue George W.

Bush's insistence that standardized testing should determine school funding, school program evaluation, and teacher effectiveness (Ansary, 2007; Frontline, 2002; Graham, 2013; Khadaroo, 2010; Ravitch, 2010a; Singer, 2015; Strauss, 2015). From comparing the United States with international peers to determining the quality of education provided to a student, the federal government steadily increased support for standardized testing over the course of three decades and five presidential administrations.

Standardized Testing. Despite the widespread support of five administrations during a period of increasing polarization in politics, American politicians have created many flaws in education due to their bipartisan support of standardized testing. The Presidential and Congressional reasoning of comparing students, schools, and countries through these tests appeals to public interest outside of educational circles because the metrics involved provide an easy way to say one entity outperformed another entity, but in its current form it does not provide a way to accurately assess authentic learning (Batt, 2013; Hart, 2014). While not providing the information on which proponents pontificate, testing negatively affects the way teachers can teach. When their evaluations depend on achievement of certain scores, teachers will narrow their curriculum to focus on tested material. Since the current form of standardized tests do not measure creative or analytical skills, curriculum design does not include these skills (Isenberg, 2015). When learning under teachers who focus on standardized tests, students rely on rote-memorization and regurgitation of facts since analysis and creativity require time to develop

which becomes an unnecessary luxury when it comes to assessment (Batt, 2013). Curriculum therefore does not have much room for deviation in such an educational environment.

Not only do schools lose the development of critical thinking and analysis skills in classes, but the type of courses that students can take while in school becomes diluted as a result of a flood of standardized test preparation (Álvarez, 2016; Strauss, 2015). If test scores become the focus of schools then subjects and lessons that do not drive these scores become less important than those subjects and lessons that can help a school raise a few percentage points or slots in state rankings. Some curriculum designers argue, then, that the arts have no role in school because they develop critical skills for which the standardized tests do not account (Isenberg, 2015; Strauss, 2016). In a local school near where this study took place, students who do not do well on the state achievement exams, or seem at risk for underperforming, must enroll in test prep courses that take away a period each day during which they could study subjects of greater personal interest. In order to pay for these classes, the professional development to teach these classes, and also analytics programs to track their success, schools must divert money from one area to another which means that non-testing programs often receive less funding than programs measured by these tests (Graham, 2013).

When looking at data, one can understand why politicians would make these decisions, but one would have to reconsider when taking into account the misinterpretation and misrepresentation of such data in the first place. Prior to *A Nation At Risk*, test scores had actually increased among all segments of the population. Lower scoring subgroups, however, had increased as percentage of the overall American population causing the overall test score average to decrease, even though each individual subgroup increased their performance on the tests (Ansary, 2007). At the same time, the United States has never scored well on international

tests dating back to the 1960's, so the Reagan administration misrepresented testing data in order to advance its own political agenda (Ravitch, 2014). By the time in depth analysis accurately described the data, the movement for these assessments already had momentum.

A Need for Globalized Education

Since *A Nation At Risk*, politicians in the United States have centered their focus on expanding internationalized education around their desire to help our country at the expense of others. Based on the administration of tests like the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the failure of American students to outrank their international peers drives globalized education initiatives. Ohio and Indiana specifically cite global economic competition as reasons for increasing language study and high school trips abroad (Frey & Whitehead, 2009). These changes in international relations have led education policy developers to believe that education should develop cultural sensitivity and empathy.

The Erosion of Nationalism and Social Action. The slow deterioration of nationalism among world leaders in favor of a global society has changed perspectives on internationalized education. While the Soviet Union's Sputnik and *A Nation At Risk* brought about globalized education with the goal of preserving United States economic superiority and hegemony, globalization has connected people in a way that make such nationalistic views immoral (Frey & Whitehead, 2009). As a result of this change, a space opens to allow the development of cultural sensitivity in students (Malewski & Phillion, 2009).

If the binds of nationalism disappear, then international suffering and disparity becomes the responsibility of people who have the means to help regardless of their national origins. Globalized education in relation to Short-Term Study Abroad programs (STSAs) can meet the challenges of helping students to realize that they travel as ambassadors for change, not savior

tourists looking for a social media post (Gaudelli, 2009; Malewski & Phillion, 2009; Sklad et al., 2016; Wallace Fuentes, 2015). Rather than look for ways to enhance our economic production at the expense of others, globalized education seeks to prepare students for the current global situation where many people believe considering the effects of any action meant for self-enhancement to be a necessity.

Adjusting Curriculum. Some scholars posit that our current state of curriculum does not adequately develop cultural empathy in students. American students fail in understanding global concepts. For an educated society, our understanding of global affairs remains disappointing, which threatens the ability of people to make informed political decisions during elections (Little, 2016). Student-spectators at various high schools across the United States participate in athletic rivalries by using racially insensitive symbols such as lynching a doll representing opponents and creating banners that use the Trail of Tears as a centerpiece (Abrams, 2014/2015). Additionally, a high percentage of high school students cannot even explain the function of the Declaration of Independence (Abrams, 2014/2015). In reality, the horrors of lynching, the Trail of Tears, the Declaration of Independence, and current events do find their way into school classrooms. Without proper context and meaning, however, students may fail to realize their learning's importance and its connection to their lives. History and social studies classes can challenge the schemata students have about particular events and connect to existing concepts when discussing unknown information.

Remaining ignorant or diminishing the importance of facts in insensitive ways provides for interesting discussions among those outside of education, but it poses trouble for other areas of civic life. The 21st century ushered in a knowledge economy vastly different than the industrial and agricultural economies that preceded it. Modern technology has made lives easier,

but it makes the future difficult. Remote management has become a reality and has taken away the autonomy of local managers who may eventually become obsolete themselves. Crowd-sourcing ideas prevents companies from hiring teams to solve problems and limits the number of jobs in the economy. Walls that divide rich and poor will only strengthen as people do not even need to come into contact with those outside of their class because they can essentially live and work anywhere with the use of technology (Facer, 2011). The modern economy has many opportunities to exploit the efforts of people at all levels of the social scale. Despite these economic realities, a space in schools exists for programs that have the ability to engage students in critical thought through cultural empathy so as to prepare students for the modern, interconnected world.

Because many people around the world can easily find themselves left behind, schools have a greater responsibility than before to develop civic-minded students. Those people with a critical, skeptical attitude will have the ability to discern efforts meant to marginalize people (Facer, 2011) and to make subordinate populations (Gatto, 1992). Civic-minded people should instead have high levels of empathy so as to seek ways to drive social change for the benefit of everyone (Bowles, 2010). Education and politics exist symbiotically as education affects politics and vice versa (Ravitch, 2010b). If our schools do not teach analytical skills, then the future of our political system remains imperiled because it rests on a foundation of skepticism.

The lack of critical analysis development in schools also threatens a person's ability to develop empathy. History provides unique opportunities to get inside the minds of others in order to determine the likely reasons for various courses of action. This empathic processing represents a high level of analysis as people must first recognize their own feelings and experiences before trying to analyze data in order to make informed decisions about the feelings

and experiences of others. If students only learn information in order to take tests, then they will not learn to doubt information presented to them. Our current political climate has emerged from this reality. Without skeptical minds, people accept the information provided for them because they do not have the skills or knowledge to label information as true or false (Nichols, 2017). The narrowing of curriculum to exclude these important skills comes as a result of three decades of emphasis on standardized tests.

Rationale

Currently, school administrators seek to develop students into citizens who can think critically for and succeed in the global economy. Our educational system uses standardized testing as an important measure for school success, but unfortunately school use of such metric limits curricular attention to programs which encourage critical thought. In the race for high test scores, school administrators have removed opportunities for students to take creative classes such as art and music (Walker, 2014). As a result of standardized testing, students lose many days of education per year with which teachers could use for more creative and analytical purposes. Educational advocates often state that education should prepare students for life after they leave school, which could influence school administrators to design programs that encourage critical thinking and attention to global issues.

Purpose

Many studies promulgate the benefits of study abroad programs, and an increasing amount of research supports STSAs of fewer than eight weeks. Few studies, however, address the implementation of such programs in secondary schools. Researchers indicate that careful study abroad program design, especially programs that utilize interventions which help students process their experiences, can foster critical thought and globally-minded citizens. Secondary

School implementation of STSAs can provide opportunities for students to develop critical thinking skills and begin to understand geopolitical issues from various perspectives different than their own understanding. Secondary school administrators who craft their schools' mission statements with clauses of twenty-first century learning and global citizenship can implement STSAs in order to make their educational offerings consistent with these mission statements.

This study analyzed student experiences in Denmark while participating in a ten-day Short-Term Study Abroad exchange program in order to gain an understanding of their intercultural development. Using group counseling sessions and journal entries to enhance the ten-day experience, I provided opportunities for students to reflect upon their experiences in order to develop a sense of their intercultural understanding. This study allowed me to adapt research on successful college-level STSAs for high school programs.

Research Questions

The main research question for this study is: How are students' experiences on Short-Term Study Abroad immersion programs intertwined with the development of their Intercultural Competence? With that main question three sub-questions help guide the research process. First, how is participation in a Short-Term Study Abroad immersion program associated with the development of a student's intercultural competence? Next, how do students use guided reflections to process their immersive experience? Finally, how do students further develop their understanding of their own culture by investigating another's culture?

Rationale for Methods

For this research design I utilized a mixed methods approach. I collected qualitative data through an ethnographic design with me serving a dual role as researcher and exchange program coordinator. Group interviews, individual interviews, and journal entries provided this data. In

order to collect quantitative data, I administered a survey intended to measure initial attitudes and potential changes regarding intercultural understanding. This section will provide a rationale for the methods that I used in this study.

Qualitative Methods

Though relatively newer in the world of research than quantitative methods, qualitative research serves the purpose of describing research subjects' experiences rather than seeking cause and effect variables. While quantitative research in some circumstances can isolate these variables, social science researchers may perceive this type of methodology as difficult because of its necessity to prove false all null hypotheses which becomes an impossible standard as human behavior does not adhere to this standard. Because of the limitations of quantitative methods, researchers have greater access through qualitative research to subjects' subjective experiences in a way that surveys and numbers often do not allow (Astroth & Chung, 2018).

Using my research questions, I sought to investigate the subjective experiences of students participating in STSAs, so a qualitative approach allowed me to better access what they encountered on the exchange by looking through their lenses of understanding (Lichtman, 2013). While the GEMS helped me to see if measurable changes took place over the course of the 10-day exchange, the qualitative methods utilized provided meaning from the students' perspectives rather than relying on my interpretation as the researcher (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2017; Schlein, 2009; Sklad et al., 2015).

In this study I investigated the experiences of students on STSA exchanges with relation to their intercultural competence. Together, the individual students on the exchange comprised the culture sharing group of the exchange program. Having a culture sharing group led to the use of ethnography for my qualitative method as I observed for shared patterns of behavior related to

intercultural competence that may have emerged (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Because the exchange program consists of a group of students in a separate setting from the rest of the school, it acts as a bounded system (Cresswell & Guetterman, 2019).

Ethnography allows a researcher to enter a culture sharing group in order to do research for the purpose of understanding the group's subtle behaviors such as unique language use (Astroth & Chung, 2018; Dines, 2018). Educational ethnographies have traditionally examined changes taking place within specific cultural groups in schools (Yon, 2003). Development of native language may take place for a specific group of students participating in an STSA exchange. Students participating in such immersive programs can develop a sense of local cultures through the use of local colloquial languages (Dines, 2018). Through the abilities of group members to represent their own individual experiences, ethnographic researchers have opportunities to understand the subtleties that exist in these groups during their intercultural competence development (Auyero & Kilanski, 2015).

As the coordinator of this exchange, I had the opportunity to engage with the culture sharing group itself through group interviews, individual interviews, and journal entries in order to hear from the students themselves about their intercultural competence development. In this setting, my role was to describe the experiences of the group rather than to provide any type of interpretations (Schindler, 2018; Yon, 2003). Study abroad research uses this framework when detailing the experiences of students participating in these programs. Gardner and colleagues (2009) described the workplace competencies reported by their former students in Michigan State's study abroad program. Sklad, Friedman, Park, and Oomen (2016) did the same as Gardener and their colleagues with students at a Dutch university who navigated the process of translating their abroad experiences in Africa to students of Dutch schools local to their

university. Qualitative data such as interviews helped these researchers and others in similar settings to understand and hear the experiences of their students without interpreting for the students.

Quantitative Methods

A survey developed for students participating in study abroad programs at the University of Delaware provided quantitative data to measure potential changes in intercultural competence of this program's participants while in Denmark. The Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS) offered an opportunity for reporting this potential changes in intercultural competence (Shadowen et al., 2015). Using the GEMS as a pre- and post-survey allowed for a quantifiable comparison of student attitudes regarding intercultural competence before and after the exchange (Anderson & Lawton, 2015; Shadowen et al., 2015; Stemler et al., 2014). In order to analyze the GEMS data, I used a paired samples t-Test in order to compare means from the same group or individual at two different times, or in the case of this study, a pre-test and a post-test (Kent State, 2019).

Significance of the Study

This study focused on the development of intercultural competence of high school students participating in an STSA foreign exchange program. Many researchers have studied the relationship between study abroad programs and intercultural competence, but limited literature exists which investigated the effects of these programs on secondary school students as opposed to college students. A smaller percentage of secondary schools than colleges and universities have study abroad programs. As a result of the disparity in numbers of programs, researchers have more opportunities to study college-level study abroad programs. This study sought to fill a

gap in the literature by investigating secondary-level study abroad programs and how they relate to the development of student intercultural competence.

Study abroad researchers debate merits of programs of various lengths. Traditionally, educators have found that long-term programs of a full academic year or a semester to have the most significant impact on participants (Dywer, 2004). Recent literature has enlightened study abroad research to the fact that short term programs can also offer significant benefits to students (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004). Studies investigating short-term programs focus not on equaling the benefits of long-term programs, but instead on the fact that they can offer significant intercultural competence development. This study provides insight into intercultural competence development among high school students participating in STSAs. Students who participated in this study's program traveled to Denmark for 10 days. During their stay they lived with host families and attended school with their Danish partners in order to take part in classes that teachers designed for the purpose of encouraging students to engage with one another about the similarities and differences between the histories, cultures, and governments of the United States and Denmark. The findings from this study could encourage more high school administrators to adopt STSAs as part of their curriculums.

The literature that I reviewed highlighted a major limitation of short-term programs versus long-term programs with regards to the development of intercultural competence. Long-term programs allow students to naturally encounter culture shock when the fun of living in a new location dissipates. By experiencing culture shock, program participants can think critically about their new situation, understand their study abroad location in terms of history and culture, and modify their levels of intercultural competence. Students can face the discomfort of culture shock while participating on an STSA, but situations eliciting it may not naturally occur, or

students may leave their study abroad location before they need to overcome any distress that may emerge. Short-term programs successful in developing participants' intercultural competence utilize interventions in order to encourage participants to recognize and process any feelings of discomfort that may emerge regarding their abroad experiences. During the trip to Denmark, I utilized two interventions designed to encourage students to process their thoughts and emotions. Students completed four journal entries that focused on their perceptions of similarities and differences in Danish and American cultures. Results from this study can help advocates of secondary Short-Term Study Abroad programs by offering evidence of student intercultural competence development in programs that utilize interventions.

Limitations

First and foremost, the nature of student participation limited the results of my study. Students taking part in the study chose themselves to take part in the exchange program. Even among students who wanted to enroll, program costs further limited the pool of applicants. The exchange program drew from two high schools in the same school district which created a geographic bias to the study. As a result of these factors, this study does not allow for any generalization.

The use of the Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS) provided a quantifiable indication of changes in cultural understanding in relation to the exchange (Shadowen et al., 2015). Various factors could have potentially affected the data collected from this scale. Students who took part in the exchange had various travel experiences prior to this program, with some students having never left the United States or even the northeastern United States, and other students having visited multiple countries. This disparity could have affected the scores on the GEMS as some students may have already developed a strong sense of cultural empathy through

their travels and therefore may not show significant growth. In addition to the effect of prior student experiences, the GEMS utilizes self-reporting items. Individual students may have interpreted their feelings recorded on the GEMS differently than their peers and thus affect the standardization of results.

Qualitative data derived from group interviews, individual interviews, and journal entries. All three of these sources could have provided misleading data as students may have chosen to share information that they believe I, as the researcher and program coordinator, would have liked to hear. The journal entries and group interview sessions occur while the students are in Denmark, so the data that they provided may not have had lasting benefits. While students did provide valuable insights, the qualitative data was not infallible.

Definition of Terms

Short-Term Study Abroad Programs (STSAs) are those programs which last fewer than eight weeks. Students participating in STSAs study in foreign countries. Programs vary in their content as some programs have students take part as a course component, some exist as service opportunities, and others take on many forms different from those mentioned.

Intercultural Competence does not have a universally agreed upon definition. In this study, Intercultural Competence refers to a developmental process characterized by sensitivity towards differences that exist between cultures (Bennett, 1993; Bennett, 2004; Lussier, 2007; Stier, 2006). An interculturally competent person tends to have high levels of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills (Stier, 2006), and exhibit flexibility, adaptability, and openness when encountering new cultures (Anderson et al., 2015, Lussier, 2007; Stier, 2006).

Summary

Despite the negative effects of European expansion from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries, populations of people negatively affected by imperialism have more opportunities than ever to have their voices heard. Those people not from these populations bear the responsibility of listening to and understanding the stories that they hear. As a result of the interconnected nature of our globalized world, schools have a responsibility to help their students develop cultural empathy through intercultural competence. Unfortunately, government mandates compel schools to focus on narrow curriculums reflected through standardized testing, so a need exists for more globalized education which seeks to solve major issues facing this world. School curricula tend to place little emphasis on the critical thinking and cultural empathy skills required for success in the modern globalized world. Short-Term Study Abroad programs can meet the educational needs of students regarding their intercultural development. In order to study this topic, I investigated the experiences of high school students participating in a Short-Term Study Abroad exchange to Denmark with regards to the development of their intercultural competence. Using a mixed methods ethnographic approach, I studied participants of a high school exchange program that partnered with a high school in Denmark. In the next chapter I will review relevant literature and describe the theoretical framework which provided the foundation for my research.

Chapter II: Review of Literature

Colleges offer programs to their students to study abroad in foreign countries in the hopes that these opportunities develop intercultural competence skills in their students (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004; Dwyer, 2004). Even the United States government values the cultural awakening that can take place while students encounter foreign cultures as these international sojourns positively influence the United States's geopolitical power and make college graduates better able to contribute to the globalized economy (CALSAFP, 2005; Frey & Whitehead, 2009; NAFSA, 2003). Beyond intercultural competence, studying abroad has numerous advantages for college students including improved academic abilities and personal growth (Dwyer, 2004; Garii, 2009; Gibbs, 2015; Rahikainen & Hakkarainen, 2013; Schleim, 2009; Smith et al., 2014). A debate does exist, however, among study abroad researchers regarding the appropriate length of a program. While much of the literature noted that long-term programs offer more benefits than short-term programs, shorter term programs still offer benefits to students (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004; Dwyer, 2004; Festervand & Tillery, 2001; Gaia, 2015; Hall et al., 2016; Nguyen, 2017; Strange & Gibson, 2017; Wallace Fuentes, 2015). Through carefully constructed programs with proper intervention strategies, Short-Term Study Abroad (STSA) program coordinators can help students profit from their overseas experiences in the same way they would if they participated in long-term programs.

In this chapter, I review the literature that supports this study, including the following topics: (a) aspects of culture and intercultural competence (b) need for developing intercultural competence in students, (c) reasons for students to study abroad, (d) differences between long-term and short-term study abroad programs, (e) short-term program benefits for students (f) and the best practices for Short-Term Study Abroad programs. Study abroad programs are not new in

academia, but an ever increasing number of college students opt for Short-Term Study Abroad programs. I conclude this chapter with my theoretical framework which draws influence from Transformative Learning Theory, the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, and the Bioecological Theory of Development.

Intercultural Competence

Researchers tend to measure the success of Study Abroad programs by their ability to develop student intercultural competence skills (Coker et al., 2018; Deardorff, 2006; Goldstein, 2019; Shadowen et al., 2015; Stemler et al., 2014). This section will begin with an explanation of culture and cultural contact, including experiencing culture shock. As researchers do not agree on one definition of intercultural competence, I will then define and explain this construct in relation to this study. The section will end with an analysis of why we should prioritize students' development of intercultural competence.

What is Culture?

Wagner and Magistrale (2003) defined culture as the “accumulation of all the unspoken aspects of everyday life” (p. 1). These aspects of daily life vary depending on where in the world people find themselves, thus cultures will then vary across the human population. Among these variations in cultural, specific cues provide guidance for people regarding how to behave, speak, and relate to one another (Weaver, 1993). Considering this diversity in culture, many people fail to realize that their thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors exist uniquely within their own cultures until they encounter different cultures (Wagner & Magistrale, 2003). Cultural interaction may even cause critical self-reflection which raises uncomfortable self-truths in people (Paige, 1993). If not monitored, such discomfort could lead to difficulty or conflict (Bennett, 1993). With a variety of

outcomes already stated, in this section I will investigate in depth what can happen to people when they interacting with a foreign culture.

Contact Hypothesis. Gordon Allport's Intergroup Contact Theory, or Contact Hypothesis, posited that groups can overcome prejudice through interaction (Forbes, 2004; Pettigrew, 1998). Alone, Allport's theory provided rationale for intercultural interaction as the world has many conflicts that grew out of intercultural conflict. Unfortunately, cultural identity creates a sense of people as others (Stier, 2006), which in turn creates division (Watt, 2012). Forbes (2004) argued that various factors influence the interaction between cultures including competition for "shared goals" between groups (p. 74). On the other hand, Forbes (2004) stated that some factors can encourage positive interaction between groups in support of Allport's theory such as "interdependence in the pursuit of common goals" and "the equality... of status of the different groups in contact" (p. 74). The development of culturally-sensitive behaviors can occur over time through education and eventually lead to greater group harmony between different culture groups (Forbes, 2004; Pettigrew, 1998).

Culture Shock. At the individual level, culture shock presents a major hurdle for people immersed in a foreign culture. Culture shock occurs when people in a foreign culture develop fear, stress, or discomfort over the fact that they do not know the cues that govern every-day life (Bennett, 1993; Wagner & Magistrale, 2003; Weaver, 1993). Paradoxically, culture shock can act as an active ingredient in developing intercultural competence in people as the disorientation from culture shock can then force people to attend to the differences in their environment (Braden & Cashwell, 2013). Culture shock may take at least a month to affect people immersed in other cultures, but eventually overseas travelers will come to miss the comfort of their home culture's routines (Wagner & Magistrale, 2003).

What is Intercultural Competence?

In order to develop intercultural competency skills, a person needs to possess high levels of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills (Stier, 2006). Intercultural competence develops when people feel sensitive towards differences which exist between cultures (Lussier, 2007). While a unanimous agreement of the definition of intercultural competence eludes researchers (Salisbury et al., 2013), various traits consistently appear in the literature including flexibility, adaptability, and openness when encountering a new culture (Deardorff, 2006; Lussier, 2007; Nguyen, 2017; Shadowen et al., 2015; Stemler et al. 2014; Williams, 2005). Some researchers perceive intercultural competence as a developmental process rather than just a set of skills (Anderson, et al., 2015; Bennett, 1993; Bennett, 2004; Lussier, 2007; Stier, 2006). Bennett (2004) viewed intercultural competence as a developmental process, rather than an objective set of skills (Anderson et al., 2015; Bennett, 2004) because it is not an inherent trait in humans (Bennett, 1993). According to Bennett (1993; 2004), intercultural competence means moving from stages of denial of, defense against, and minimization of cultural differences to an enlightened state of acceptance of, adaptation to, and integration of these variations.

Regardless of if intercultural competence exists as a process or identifiable skills, interculturally competent people confront other cultures without rigidity in their views, or static and preconceived notions. Using the aforementioned characteristics and skill sets, various researchers have attempted to develop measurement scales for intercultural development while participating in study abroad programs. Shadowen and colleagues (2015) created the Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS) for Short-Term Study Abroad Participants at the University of Delaware. The GEMS measured cultural engagement, tolerance for ambiguity, knowledge of the host site, diversity openness, and resilience in order to assess levels of

intercultural competence development (Shadowen et al., 2015). Stemler and colleagues (2104) developed the Wesleyan Intercultural Competence Scale (WICS) using Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). The WICS measures ethnocentric (lacking empathy of other cultures) and ethno-relative (understanding and appreciating cultural differences) responses to various situations students may encounter while abroad (Stemler et al., 2014). Unlike the GEMS and WICS, Deardorff (2006) advocated for a measurement approach which utilized both qualitative and quantitative data.

Needing Intercultural Competence

Places in the world exist where people can choose to live without encountering other cultures, but the 21st century world has few places of such isolation. As mentioned in the previous chapter, our world has become increasingly globalized since the 19th century. According to Stier (2006), "Internationalization, in one way or another, is about intercultural communication" (p. 5). Learners need to become aware of new challenges related to cultural integration which emerged from globalization efforts (Lussier, 2007) such as social unrest, violence, and economic disparity (Eidelson & Eidelson, 2003; Reilly & Senders, 2009). The awareness mentioned above derives from students learning to interact with people of diverse backgrounds and beliefs using significant levels of empathy (Bennett, 2009; Sobania & Braskamp, 2009). Cultural immersion can play a major role in intercultural development (Braden & Cashwell, 2013) especially as secondary sources of information do not always paint accurate portraits of foreign cultures (Watt, 2012). Considering the need for intercultural competence highlighted above, I will describe in this section concerns regarding national security and the increasingly internationalized job market in order to illustrate specific reasons why students need to develop intercultural competence skills.

National Security. Study abroad has existed for a long time at the college level, but the attacks on September 11, 2001 awakened the United States government to the need to encourage more college students to study abroad (Salisbury et al., 2013). In the days following 9/11, the Bush administration realized that they needed to recruit significant numbers of people who understood the complexities and nuances of the many cultures of the Middle East (CALSAFP, 2005; NAFSA, 2003). Beyond just the Middle East, the United States has seen intercultural knowledge development in education as essential for national security (Eidelson & Eidelson, 2003). American politicians hoped to devise ways to make study abroad more accessible to all students given the importance such an experience could play for national security (NAFSA, 2003). In order to confront 21st century realities, students can benefit from firsthand knowledge of other cultures (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004). The United States Department of State saw study abroad as a way to develop intercultural skills that could prepare students for the “economic, military, and diplomatic” needs of the country (CALSAFP, 2005).

Internationalized Job Market. Even in peace efforts, the United States needs students with intercultural skills. Very few communities in the United States are free of globalization’s web (CALSAFP, 2005). America’s economic ventures involve interaction with countries and cultures around the globe, and in order to succeed in private industry, one must possess abilities to constructively work with people of diverse backgrounds or the United States may find itself on the sidelines of global economics (CALSAFP, 2005; NAFSA, 2003). The Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program (2003) noted:

Mistakes involving the Third World and its debt have cost American financiers billions of dollars. And our lack of knowledge about economic, commercial, and industrial

developments in Japan, China, and India, successively, has undermined American competitiveness. Global competence costs, but ignorance costs far more. (p. 3)

The above quote displays the need to have people who understand the world and its various people. “Contact zones,” where two cultures meet, especially need attention from students in their development (Reilly & Senders, 2009). In addition to the United States, the European Union cites economic needs as a major reason for including intercultural competence development in student education (Watt, 2012).

Why Study Abroad at All?

Study abroad programs provide opportunities for learning and growth beyond what student can learn in the classroom. When students take part in Study Abroad programs, they develop skills and attributes that help them in their academics as well as their personal lives. Many programs highlight the growth of cultural understanding and awareness for participants. In this section I will review the literature regarding the reasons that students should enroll in study abroad programs.

Study Abroad and Intercultural Competence. Williams (2005) stated that “at any given time, exposure to various cultures is the best predictor of intercultural communication skills” (p. 369). When students study abroad, they inevitably encounter cultural elements out of their normal frame of reference (Schlein, 2009). Williams’s (2005) assessment supports other study abroad research which has concluded that participation in such overseas educational programs increases student intercultural competence (Coker et al., 2018; Dwyer, 2004; Gaia, 2015; Heinzmann et al., 2015; Stemler et al., 2014; Wallace Fuentes, 2015). Dwyer (2004) found that not only did study abroad develop a more sophisticated way of looking at the world, but that alumni of these programs sought additional opportunities to learn about other cultures as well.

For the reasons stated above, the United States Department of State established a study abroad office in 2014 in the hopes of increasing the number of students taking part in study abroad programs (Strange & Gibson, 2017). Studying abroad can change how people perceive foreign cultures and make them more willing to positively engage with people who exhibit cultural differences (Ritz, 2011), which will help prepare students for the interconnectedness of today's world (Festervand & Tillery, 2001).

Study Abroad and Academics. While cultural competence increases, students studying abroad also see gains in other areas related to their education (Dwyer, 2004). Gibbs (2015) found that tying study abroad programs to course content could increase student understanding. Particularly, Gibbs's (2015) program gave students context for more in-depth classroom discussions about historical events the region of the world where the program took place. According to Schlein, (2009), pre-service teachers taking part in an abroad program displayed increases in global-mindedness and cultural awareness which diversity classes in education programs try to teach. In a similar fashion, Smith and colleagues (2014) used their program to Ireland to enrich their curriculum on diversity for counselors and in the process captured growth in cultural diversity knowledge and understanding of social structures for counseling students. Similarly, Wallace Fuentes (2015) developed an STSA in order to enhance her course on the history of the Yucatán Peninsula.

Study Abroad and Personal Growth. In addition to academic gains, many students experience significant personal growth and increase in self-confidence as well through studying abroad (Rahikainen & Hakkarainen, 2013). Gaia (2015) found that students taking part in study abroad programs developed an increase in "awareness of their own identity and factors that may influence their self-perceptions" (p. 27). During the development of professional identity, any

teacher can speak of the need to accept that plans often need to change abruptly. The ability to recognize how to handle these ambiguous situations does not come easy, but Garii (2009) found that a study abroad experience for pre-service teachers stimulated growth in their aptitude to encounter uncertainty. While colleges advertise their study abroad programs as opportunities for strengthening cultural understanding and foreign language enhancement, these studies illustrated that these programs can enhance personal development and growth.

Long-Term or Short-Term Study Abroad

Study abroad researchers divide experiences into Long-Term Study Abroad (LTSA) programs of at least a semester of study in a foreign country, and Short-Term Study Abroad (STSA) programs of fewer than eight weeks (Spencer & Tuma, 2007). Program coordinators promulgate the benefits of studying abroad in order to justify to administrators, students, and parents the amount of time and money required to take part in these experiences. Earlier I enumerated the benefits of study abroad in general, but a debate among researchers exists over the quality of STSAs in reference to LTSAs. Two studies appear in most of the research on this topic and accurately illustrate the debate between these two types of study abroad programs. Dwyer (2004) argued that longer programs offer greater benefits to students than shorter programs because they give them more of a chance to organically develop cultural understanding and awareness. On the other hand, Chieffo and Griffiths (2004) provided evidence that programs of eight weeks or less can positively impact students' cultural development. In this section I will (a) describe how LTSAs provide more benefits than STSAs for students, and (b) highlight the main points of how STSAs can benefit participants including by making studying abroad more equitable.

Long-Term Study Abroad. LTSAs provide opportunities for students to continue their education overseas for a semester, full academic year, or longer. When considering the whole population of American students studying abroad over the past thirty years, a smaller percentage of students participate in long-term programs as students increasingly have opted for shorter term programs (Coker et al., 2018; Dwyer, 2004; Gaia, 2015; Goldstein, 2019; Nguyen, 2014; Spencer & Tuma, 2007). Many researchers highlight the added benefits of LTSAs over STSAs for participants (Coker et al., 2018; Dwyer, 2004; Gaia, 2015; Heinzmann et al., 2015; Kehl & Morris, 2008). According to these researchers, while STSAs can benefit students, LTSAs provide the most impactful and beneficial experiences for participants. Data from student surveys revealed significant gains for LTSAs over STSAs with regards to academic attainment, intercultural development, career impact, and personal growth (Dwyer, 2004). Coker and colleagues (2018) found that students who studied abroad for a semester rather than over winter-term STSA reported better outcomes such as “contributing to class discussion, including diverse perspectives in discussions and assignments, synthesis of ideas... empathy... critical thinking, and working effectively with others” (p. 101). Attempting to explain such a variation, Heinzmann and colleagues (2015) accounted for the difference in positive outcomes between LTSA and STSA participants to “the fact that people who only stay in the host culture for a very short time have extremely limited opportunities” to encounter cultural elements that encourage transformative growth (p. 201). Consistently in the literature, LTSAs seem to outweigh STSAs in terms of benefits to participants.

Short-Term Study Abroad. Traditionally, students took part in long-term programs of a semester or a year, and some even for longer (Spencer & Tuma, 2007). Since the 1980’s, college students choose more and more to take part in STSAs to the point where students studying

overseas for one to eight weeks account for about 60% of all study abroad participants (Coker et al., 2018; Dwyer, 2004; Gaia, 2015; Goldstein, 2019; Nguyen, 2014; Spencer & Tuma, 2007). As addressed in the previous section, if the literature suggested that LTSAs offer more benefit than STSAs, then one may ask why a college would offer STSAs at all? Many students, in fact, cannot afford to spend a year or even a semester away from their home campus as a result of financial, social, academic, occupational, and/or family reasons (Gaia, 2015; Gibbs, 2015, Spencer & Tuma, 2007). Studying abroad for a semester or more may cost too much for some students, and others may have majors with very restrictive course loads that do not have the flexibility to take time away from campus (Gaia, 2015; Gibbs, 2015; Spencer & Tuma, 2007). As previously stated in support of STSAs, entering a foreign culture in any capacity offers opportunities for growth in cultural understanding and intercultural competence. Unless the structure of college education changes to allow all students flexibility to study, or fewer students feel social, occupational, or family pressures to stay at their home campuses, then STSAs offer the best opportunities for students to have a change to study abroad. A small amount of exposure to a foreign culture offers more benefits to students than no exposure (Coker et al., 2018). Based on the literature, STSAs positively impact outcomes for participants with regards to their intercultural competence, academics, and personal growth.

STSAs and Intercultural Competence. Traveling to another country offers people opportunities to learn about other cultures. Some overseas experiences, though, only offer travelers an ability to see foreign lands through what Wallace Fuentes (2015) refers to as a “vacation filter” (p. 1023). Such a filter removes many realities of the experienced culture and the foreign environment, but STSAs can operate without such manipulation. In fact, according to Heinzmann and colleagues (2015), participation in an STSA can predict growth in intercultural

competence. Just taking part in a program can encourage a desire in students to engage in learning about other cultures (Dwyer, 2004; Gaia, 2015; Strange & Gibson, 2017). Nguyen's (2017) study found "significant impacts on students' self-perceived intercultural competency" when participating in an STSA (p 123). As with any measure of significance, sustainability offers a measure of impact, and her study found that students still displayed these intercultural results months after STSA participation (Nguyen, 2017).

In terms of the intercultural competence development, STSAs accomplish this feat in multiple ways. STSAs can help students become more aware of their own cultural values and biases (Dwyer, 2004; Festervand & Tillery, 2001). While not as great as LTSA participants, 95% of those who enrolled in an STSA reported this awareness growth (Dwyer, 2004). In a subsequent section I will discuss STSA formatting, but the correct structure can provide good social connections with people from foreign cultures (Rahikainen & Hakkarainen, 2013). Proper structuring of STSAs removes tourist tendencies and encourages students to engage with people different than themselves leading to a breakdown of preconceived notions about other cultures (Hall et al., 2016; Smith et al., 2014).

STSAs and Academics. Just as important for any institution, the academic development students display after participating in STSAs make these programs appealing for college administrators to endorse. Coker and colleagues (2018) found that students who participated in STSAs rated their college and college experience higher than those who did not participate in any study abroad. Their assessment found significant differences with items such as quality of academic advising and whether or not they would attend the same institution if they could start college over again (Coler et al., 2018). Though Dwyer (2004) focuses on the merits of LTSA over STSAs, she does note that STSAs positively influence student academics. Students in her

study reported that STSA participation made them more interested in their academic pursuits, as well as influenced their decision to pursue future academic endeavors (Dwyer, 2004). In terms of academics, STSAs provide opportunities to encourage critical thought and allow students to question what they believe because these programs take students from what they know and place them into situations that make them feel unsure in themselves (Hall et al., 2016; Ritz, 2011). When taken from the comfort of previous experiences, students develop coping skills that then empower them to develop confidence in themselves and to seek answers to the questions they face (Hill, 2007). Study abroad extends learning done in the classroom for students which explains the academic gains reported in these studies.

STSAs and Participant Sense of Self-Identity. STSAs can achieve academic and intercultural outcomes desired by institutions willing to invest effort in their creation and administration, but they can also lead to various personal developments such as a better sense of self-identity (Gaia, 2015; Jewet, 2010). Many students who travel abroad for the first time find themselves reconciling their notions of identity in the United States which often derive from the cultural heritage of their ancestors. While leading an STSA in Ireland, Jewet (2010) helped her participants navigate the internal conflicts they reported over having to reconfigure their identities. Many engaged in the interactive process of identity development for the first time as they uncovered what it meant to identify as American as opposed to Irish-American (Jewet, 2010). According to Gaia (2015), STSA students developed an “awareness of their own identity and factors that may influence their self-perceptions such as race, ethnicity, and gender” (p. 27). When confronted with culturally different people from foreign countries, students often engage in introspection in order to rectify their sense of self versus the definition placed on them by the people they encounter (Jewet, 2010).

STSAs and Participant Self-Awareness. In addition to developing a sense of self-identity, STSAs promote greater self-awareness in participants (Festervand & Tillery, 2001; Gaia, 2015; Jewet, 2010; Smith et al., 2014). As previously mentioned, Smith and colleagues (2014) found that STSAs can enhance student awareness of their own biases. Counseling students who took part in their study reported challenges during their short stay in Ireland because they needed to change their frames of reference about issues that they may encounter in their future professional settings. Participants needed to reconfigure their perceptions because they viewed counseling issues from the perspectives of a foreign culture. In the end, these counseling students became more aware of their personal beliefs regarding these issues, and used this new self-awareness to expand their views of how to help clients of diverse backgrounds (Smith et al., 2014). This growth in self-awareness can also lead to greater self-confidence as reported by Rahikainen & Hakkarainen (2013) in their study of Finnish high school students studying in Sweden. Encountering a new environment led students in this study to develop confidence in themselves to engage and overcome new and challenging situations.

STSAs and Participant Interpersonal Skills. Research also supports the notion that STSAs can help develop interpersonal skills in participants as students often find themselves engaging with people whom they have never met in a manner they would not otherwise do while at home (Gaia, 2015; Jewet, 2010; Nguyen, 2017). Gaia (2015) reported that STSA participants became more willing to “interact with personas from cultures other than their own” (p. 27). Through this contact students developed culturally based interpersonal skills. As previously mentioned, Jewet (2010) found that students negotiated their sense of identity as they developed their ability to communicate with people of a foreign culture. Nguyen (2017) found that students who participated in STSAs built and maintained friendships past their experience abroad. STSA

research shows that short-term programs can help students' enhance their interpersonal skills by learning to connect with people of foreign cultures.

Best Practices for STSAs: Developing Intercultural Competence

Relatively new in popularity, STSAs receive criticism because they do not have the same level of benefits as do LTSAs. As a result of the scrutiny facing STSAs due to their brevity, STSA administrators seek to design programs that provide the most positive and educationally beneficial experiences for students. Contrary to the belief that students need LTSAs to maximize the benefits of studying abroad, recent research suggested that the length of time participating in a study abroad program does not matter as much as the quality and significance of experiences that students have while overseas (Goldstein, 2019; Stemler et al., 2014). LTSAs may appear to provide more benefits not because of their length, but because a longer stay in a foreign country increases the chances that students will have significant experiences (Goldstein, 2019). The task for STSA administrators then becomes designing and implementing programs which ensure students have enough culturally significant and enriching experiences.

Because of the limited amount of time STSA students spend in foreign countries, program coordinators must design programs that expose students to elements of host cultures and that help students recognize and confront their feelings in a foreign land. According to the literature, successful STSAs employ interventions in order to help students develop significant meaning in their time abroad (Dwyer, 2004; Vande Berg et al., 2015; Wong, 2015). Students develop intercultural competence not just because of exposure to foreign cultures, but because of how they respond to that exposure, and interventions help them respond in productive ways by allowing students to develop successful coping skills in the face of intercultural differences (Vande Berg et al., 2009).

In this section I investigate the literature regarding STSA intervention strategies that help to create successful programs. I will first examine studies which review the importance of creating programs with (a) clear direction and well-established goals, (b) mentor guidance, (c) course-associations, (d) pre-travel orientations and (e) full immersion. Programs with implement the above mentioned interventions can provide significant opportunities for students to develop their intercultural competence.

Clear Direction and Goals

Before any interventions take place during STSAs, educators must first design well-structured programs (Bell & Anscombe, 2013; Donnelly-Smith, 2009). STSAs have limited time to develop intercultural competence in students and to meet academic needs of the programs and universities. As a result of time constraints, administrators and coordinators of successful STSAs make a concerted effort to provide meaningful structure to their programs in the form of imbedded reflection, immersion activities (Donnelly-Smith, 2009). While STSAs naturally will offer fewer opportunities for authentic and meaningful intercultural experiences and reflections, program coordinators and administrators can offset such a deficit by creating and scheduling meaningful activities and experiences.

In order to ensure the most beneficial structure, successful STSAs have clearly defined outcomes, objectives, and learning goals (Nguyen, 2017; Sklad et al., 2016; Wong, 2015). Wong (2015) described study abroad research prior to 2013 as lacking in concern regarding learning outcomes when measuring success of programs. He found this deficiency detrimental and felt that study abroad programs needed a “wake-up call” as these programs lacked learning targets for students (pp. 121-122). In their study of preservice teachers participating in a STSA to Honduras, Malewski and Phillion (2009) reported significant progress in participants’

intercultural development. Their program description provided evidence of clear goals for the success of their STSA including increasing their students' multicultural and global understanding, and developing their language skills (p. 48). The students of their program successfully encountered Honduran culture and national issues for the purpose of achieving the stated goals (Malewski & Phillion, 2009). Sklad and colleagues (2016) established a similar goal of providing an opportunity to "better equip their students to function effectively in, and to contribute positively to, this changing world" (p. 323) so that students do not just learn, but instead respond to calls for action (p. 336). Their Going Glocal program had a "positive effect" as students "gained a global perspective, global competence, a sense of social responsibility, and intercultural communication competencies" (p. 336). Because coordinators of these two STSAs designed their programs with clear goals, the programs provided the best outcomes for the students (Bell & Anscombe, 2013; Nguyen, 2017).

Mentorship and Guided Reflection

Successful STSAs tend to have strong mentorship and guidance programs. As previously mentioned, LTSAs offer more chances for significant cultural interaction than do STSAs, so short-term programs can offset this difference by providing specific opportunities for students to reflect on their experiences under the guidance of a mentor (Bell & Anscombe, 2013; Smith et al., 2014; Vande Berg et al., 2015). In an STSA to Vietnam, Hall and colleagues (2016) found that intellectual scaffolding from a mentor helped students to maximize the benefits of their time abroad. They write, "through guided reflection and institutional support, the opportunity for positive transformation can be channeled into more profound gains, away from superficial or stereotypical self-understandings" (p. 36). Vande Berg, and colleagues (2015) stated that strong cultural mentors served as the most important intervention to develop intercultural competence.

According to Vande Berg et al. (2015), mentorship helps to provide “study abroad students with the tools to respond to, and manage, those differences” that they encounter while abroad (p. 4). Numerous programs have made use of guided reflection in various forms including writing and in-person discussion.

Reflecting Through Discussion. Despite differences in lengths of time overseas and program structures, all STSAs can offer discussion opportunities in order to help students reflect on the encounters and experiences they have. Along with the clear structure and goals of STSAs mentioned previously, opportunities for reflection and dialogue have significant impact on students in these programs (Donnelly-Smith, 2009; Gaia, 2015; Nguyen, 2014). These discussion sessions can help students in a program bond, while also providing feedback to challenge their beliefs and thoughts in order to minimize the effects of their personal bias (Nguyen, 2014). As an option to teach about the host culture, programs can provide engaging readings in order to help foster student discussion about their experiences (Gibbs, 2015). When studying the development of sense of identity in Ireland, Jewett (2010) found that having focus groups for group reflection before, during, and after the experience provided students with adequate preparation for the trip as well as understanding during and after the experience. Similarly, Ritz (2010) brought students to Costa Rica for an STSA focused on enlightening students about sustainable tourism in developing countries. By the end, she found that having evening discussion ensured that students fully engaged with the local community in Costa Rica (Ritz, 2010). However, discussions cannot happen with inexperienced mentors as they need enough knowledge to guide students in these sessions (Donnelly-Smith, 2009).

Reflecting Through Writing. Group discussion sessions provide one opportunity for reflection, but STSA coordinators can mentor and guide students through individual efforts such

as journaling or reflective essays. In an STSA to Honduras for pre-service teachers, Malewski and Phillion (2009) developed participants' multicultural understanding for when they have jobs as teachers and must engage with students of various ethnic backgrounds. In the short period of time that they had, they found that reflective journals, critical analyses, and reading logs helped to guide students to the desired cultural understanding (Malewski & Phillion, 2009). Like Malewski and Phillion (2009), Gaia (2015) also stated that journaling helped to enhance cultural understanding and self-awareness of participants. Journaling and written reflection offers STSA participants an opportunity for introspection to investigate and challenge personal attitudes, feelings, and beliefs (Hall et al., 2016). Extension activities such as digital storytelling can augment reflective writing's benefits (Hall et al., 2016). Through this investigative process students can develop open-minded attitudes when it comes to other cultures (Sklad et al., 2016).

Proper Reflection. As the literature suggests, guided reflection helps to focus students during their meaning making processes abroad. Wong (2018) though cautions about reflection and too much mentor guidance. Semi-structured reflection helps to elicit truthful attitudes and give students opportunities for authentic introspection (Jewet, 2010, Wong, 2018). In a group setting, participants may feel social pressure to act or reflect in a specific manner (Wong, 2018). Though guided reflection does have many benefits, (Smith, et al., 2014), successful STSAs do not rely on rigid reflection because of its inauthenticity (Wong, 2018). As the literature established the importance of reflection, well run STSAs put at the helm experienced or well-trained coordinators who can target student biases and maximize participant reflection (Donnelly-Smith, 2009).

Course Component

As stated a few times previously, STSAs do not have the same number of natural opportunities as LTSAs for significant cultural impact. Just as mentors, discussions, and written reflections can provide successful interventions for STSA participants, so too can programs that are part of or in conjunction with course components. In order to increase program outcomes for students, many universities utilize STSAs as components of courses (Malewski & Phillion, 2009; Ritz, 2010; Sklad et al., 2016; Smith et al., 2014; Wallace Fuentes, 2015). Gaia (2015) found the “embedded model” (pp. 22-23) most beneficial to students. Through the embedded model students travel as part of a course, but after the course completes. The embedded model allows sufficient and extensive preparation prior to travel so that students have an awareness of the experiences they will have, so that they can pay attention during the short duration of an STSA (Gaia, 2015). After a semester of a sustainable tourism course, Ritz (2010) completed the course with a two-week trip to Costa Rica. Wallace Fuentes (2015) traveled to Mexico in the middle of the semester as part of their course on the history of the Yucatán. Participants in Smith and colleagues’ (2014) study traveled to Ireland following completion of a course on social and cultural issues in counseling. The course prior to leaving sought to increase awareness of cultural customs, values, and biases, as well as to understand “factors that affect relationships among people of differing background” (Smith et al., 2014). Similarly, Malewski and Phillion (2009) had students participate in courses on Honduran culture, history, and current affairs prior to an STSA experience. The above studies followed programs that found success because of the strong academic content they provided in conjunction with the travel experiences so that students had a foundation of cultural knowledge on which to build while abroad (Donnelly-Smith, 2009). Course components can also offer for STSAs what one may learn naturally through LTSAs.

Even in the case where the STSA experience serves as the whole course, engaging readings and informative lectures while abroad can stimulate knowledge development (Gibbs, 2015; Smith et al., 2014).

Pre-Orientation

When STSAs do not occur as part of a course, proper orientation prior to departure helps to ensure a successful experience. Wallace Fuentes (2015) argued that students need to have proper context and knowledge of their host culture in order to have the best possible abroad experience. Even when not part of a course, successful STSAs provide students with opportunities for academic preparation (Bell & Anscombe, 2013). These opportunities for students to learn about their upcoming experiences receive strong support from university administrators because of the value that they provide to the end result of students' experiences overseas (Vande Berg et al., 2009). Pre-travel interventions can give students the focus that they need to uncover important aspects of their program while overseas (Goldstein, 2019). In the case of students who hoped to develop their foreign language skills while participating in STSAs, Vande Berg and colleagues (2009) found that "students who had participated in a pre-departure orientation with a cultural component showed higher oral proficiency gains than those who did not" (p. 27).

Immersion and Direct Contact

As a result of the short nature of an STSA, program coordinators express that direct contact with members of the host culture can be a very important way of stimulating intercultural development (Smith et al, 2014). Donnelly-Smith (2009) listed contact and integration with the local community as one of the top five best practices for STSA program design (p. 13). Taking a trip where one sees people from afar simplifies culture to the point where they essentially

become “sanitized” experiences (Wallace Fuentes, 2015). Immersing students in the host culture can force them to challenge their beliefs, assumptions, and stereotypes as they have direct conversations with many people of different cultures (Ritz, 2011). Through these discussions, students will learn the intricacies of the cultures in which they find themselves. Successful STSAs integrate this direct contact into the program because the short duration would naturally limit the opportunities to see people of the host culture as they live (Heinzmann et al., 2015). Jewett found that interactions with local Irish citizens helped American STSA students better understand their own identities and self-perceptions, particularly with regard to their cultural heritages. Carefully structured and embedded interactions can expose students to more contact than they would normally have over a short trip overseas.

Homestays. In order to maximize contact with a STSA’s host culture, program coordinators place students in the homes of residents in order to provide an intimate look into locals’ lives. In a study of Finnish high school students studying in Sweden, Rahikainen & Hakkarainen (2013) found that students who took part in homestays had significantly greater intercultural gains than those students who resided in hotels. Gibbs (2015) found that homestays can increase student understanding of host cultures as well as provide insights into their own cultures. Conversations during homestays may help students to provide context and process their daily experiences in a way that conversing with other participants in a hotel will not.

Activities. Meaningfully planned activities have a tremendous effect on the outcome of STSA programs (Wong, 2015). While homestays provide students with insight into the private lives of people within host cultures and allow for intimate relationships to develop, well-planned activities and excursions can offer insight into how a culture as a whole operates. Various STSAs that focus on teacher preparation will immerse participants in local schools as assistants or to

teach lessons (Malewski & Phillion, 2009; Sklad et al., 2016). In a similar fashion, Smith and colleagues (2014) designed a program to have counseling students work in an Irish counseling center in order to investigate the impact diversity and culture can have in their field. Bell and Anscombe (2013) found significant intercultural growth of students participating in a two-week STSA to India during which they received placements in community agencies focused on social justice initiatives. The researchers in the previously mentioned study found that students developed a greater appreciation for international social justice efforts in just the two weeks in India (Bell & Anscombe, 2013). Even just having local people provide lectures on topics of importance to the host culture can offer needed contact for students (Donnelly-Smith, 2009).

Theoretical Framework Overview

My research into Short Term Study Abroad programs (STSAs) draws from three theories: Transformative Learning Theory (TLT), Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), and the Bioecological Theory (BET). TLT will provide the foundation for my theoretical framework but the DMIS and BET will both have minor influences. This section will summarize each of the three theories, as well as address the limitations of each theory. Each section will end with a connection to my research on STSAs and to the main theory of TLT.

Transformative Learning Theory

Jack Mezirow's (1997) theory emphasizes how people learn best when confronted with a problem that they must solve and then reflect upon, as this reflection allows for growth and transformation. In this section, I will (a) summarize the theory, (b) provide the limitations of TLT, and (c) end with a connection to STSAs.

Overview of TLT. TLT theorists explain that when learners encounter unfamiliar situations that cause distress and discomfort, they learn by navigating themselves through these

difficulties. A major component of the theory is the disorientation dilemma during which learners overcome obstacles that they face. Following this disorientation dilemma, learners reflect on their process of solving these problems. Recent research of TLT focuses on the importance of critically reflecting on experiences related to disorientation dilemmas.

Disorientation Dilemma. Our minds develop cognitive scripts known as schemas causing us to act in very specific ways (Mezirow, 1997). A key component of TLT is the disorienting dilemma, which provides challenges or obstacles that one must overcome. This obstacle often causes discomfort or unease in the person involved in the confrontation with the obstacle. According to the disorienting dilemma people must be able to problem solve and navigate their way out of the situations in which they find themselves. When confronted with disorientation dilemmas, people must use all of the tools at their disposal in order to make their situations more familiar, comfortable, and navigable (Alfred et al., 2013). By encountering and solving their disorientation dilemmas, learners acquires new skills and paradigms (Mezirow, 1997).

Critical Reflection. Mezirow (1997) states that overcoming disorientation dilemmas does not end the procedure for learners as they must also have reflective experiences in order to process and understand any transformations that take place. Through critical reflections, people can better understand their cognitions prior to and during the disorientation dilemmas. By fully comprehending their thoughts, learners can compare perceptions from before and after their disorienting dilemmas in order to change their schemas and use their experiences to best adapt to new worldviews (Alfred et al., 2013; Taylor, 2008). Mezirow (1997) argued that transformation occurs through these reflections because the new schemas allow new meanings and understandings to provide roadmaps for how to encounter future situations (Alfred et al., 2013). Critical reflections serve an important purpose, as previous experiences have shaped people's

thoughts and behaviors. Many such experiences become problematic, so the disorientation dilemma and critical reflections allow learners to become a more independent thinkers who develop greater agency (Alfred et al., 2013; Mezirow, 1997; Mezirow, 1998).

Criticisms. Though very useful in describing an authentic form of learning, TLT does have limitations. First, TLT emphasizes adult education too much despite the fact that it can explain adolescent learning. This theory also assumes that negative feelings guide and drive the reflective process. This section will summarize the limitations of this theory.

Focus on Adults. A major shortcoming of Transformative Learning Theory's application to my specific research is that it focuses heavily on adult learning with little reference to adolescent learning (Alfred et al., 2013, Cranton & Taylor, 2012; Taylor, 2008). Adults learn differently than children and adolescents as adults learn through life changing experiences that allow for reflection and perspective changing, while learning is a full-time job for children. (Merriam & Clark, 1991). Because adults face more of these experiences than children throughout their lives, Mezirow developed his theory to explain how adults develop their understanding of the world (Mezirow, 2012).

While Mezirow's (2012) research focused on adult learning, this theory can apply to high school STSAS research because STSAs place students in uncomfortable and unfamiliar situations that can transform their understanding of culture as they must navigate their way through difficult experiences (Baumgartner, 2012). Students may encounter such a difficult experience when trying to make sense of cultural differences. Such cultural disparities may act as a disorientation dilemma through which they will learn about foreign cultures. Mezirow's (1997; 1998; 2012) theory explains this process as the students overcome this dilemma through reflecting on the differences they face before possibly changing their perspectives.

Suggested Feelings. According to TLT, negative feelings, such as guilt and discontent, guide the transformative process – particularly in the critical reflection stages (Alfred et al., 2013). Similarly, positive cognitions could affect learning as well. When navigating disorientation dilemmas, convenience or enlightenment may help people recognizing new ways to think or behave without feeling ashamed of prior thoughts or behaviors.

STSAs and TLT. Despite the limitations to Mezirow's theory that I discuss in the previous sections, TLT does have a strong connection to the goals of STSAs. First, when students enter a new culture, they may develop feelings of discomfort which can create a disorientation dilemma for them. The guided reflection that I used for my research can help process information for learners during their transformation.

Abroad Experiences and Disorientation Dilemmas. Biases and pre-conceived notions can affect a person participating in an STSA, but experiences overseas can help one overcome these cognitive distortions. Students may challenge their sense of identity when traveling abroad, as coming into contact with others allows them to see themselves from the viewpoint of others (Jewett, 2010). This type of experience can cause the discomfort and unease associated with the disorientation dilemma of the Transformative Learning process.

In the post-colonial geopolitical landscape, populations of people once silenced by imperialist occupiers have opportunities to share their voices and experiences with the rest of the world (Cary & Mutua, 1995). Third spaces exist between the understandings of different people and provide platforms for people to share and express these differences, which often forces those present to examine their own perceptions (Cary & Mutua, 2010; Crump, 2010). Globalization makes these third spaces essential, as people in the modern world place great emphasis on understanding cultural differences and developing cultural sensitivity (Frey & Whitehead, 2009;

Malewski & Phillion, 2009). STSAs provide students with opportunities to enter into these third spaces as they come across people of various cultures and encounter the disorientation dilemma of knowing that their worldviews may face challenges from those of various cultures.

Guided Reflection and Processing New Experiences. Mezirow (1998) argued that we need to change our frames of reference and schemas by examining our thoughts, feelings, and attitudes when we come across uncomfortable and disorienting situations. While LTSAs allow students to naturally reflect on and challenge their assumptions, the vacation filter of a shorter program may inhibit abilities of students to recognize opportunities in situations to challenge their thoughts and develop new schemas regarding cultural differences (Wallace Fuentes, 2015). Successful STSAs include reflection components, such as guided reflection sessions, in order to start meaning making processes (Nguyen, 2014; Smith et al., 2014; Ritz, 2011). STSA coordinators in these successful programs provide structures that allow their students to make meaning of their experiences in a short period of time. Essentially, they help students develop skills to overcome disorientation, but in abbreviated timeframes.

Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

Like Transformative Learning Theory, Constructivism inspired the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). As with Constructivism, according to the DMIS, experience helps learners to develop their own knowledge and understanding (Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen, & Hubbard, 2006). In terms of DMIS, people develop a sensitivity to intercultural differences based on their experiences in encountering cultural differences and constructing an understanding of those differences (Anderson et al., 2006). Bennett (2004) created his model in order to describe the variations that exist regarding intercultural competence and communication. The DMIS extends beyond just developing knowledge of another culture,

but rather sees cultural sensitivity as a process which gradually enlightens a person to the merits of one's own and other cultures (Bennett, 2004). Bennett (2016) viewed this process as coming to "appreciate alternative ways of being human" (p. 10). An exchange program should help develop intercultural understanding, so the DMIS will support Transformative Learning Theory in creating the lens with which I will view this exchange. In this section, I summarize the DMIS, provide information regarding its limitations, and end by connecting DMIS to TLT and STSAs.

A Process of Cultural Enlightenment. The DMIS does not establish characteristics for what does or does not make someone intercultural competent, but rather describes the process for how people come to understand variations of culture as differences rather than positive or negative in comparison to their own cultures (King & Baxter, 2005). While undergoing this process, people move from ethnocentric to ethnorelative viewpoints and behaviors (Bennett, 1993; Bennett, 2004; Bennett, 2017). In this section I will describe each of these two sets of beliefs.

Ethnocentric. In the ethnocentric stages, people perceive their own cultures as central to the reality of the world (Bennett, 1993; Bennett, 2004; Bennett & Bennett, 2004; Bennett, 2017). In this stage, people often avoid cultural difference by "denying its existence, raising defenses against it, or minimizing its importance" (Bennett & Bennett, 2004). Essentially people in the ethnocentric stages of denial, defense, and minimization feel threatened by cultural differences and they desire protection of their own values and beliefs (Bennett, 2004) as these values and beliefs emerge from one's own sense of self (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005).

Ethnorelative. Unlike people in the ethnocentric stages who view culture as a competition that they must win, people in the ethnorelative stages view their own cultures as one option in a myriad of cultures (Bennett, 2004). According to Bennett and Bennett (2004) people

in the ethnorelative stages experience their own culture “in the context of other cultures” (p. 14). Rather than feeling threatened by cultural differences, people in the stages of acceptance, adaptation, and integration view cultural variations as assets that they should explore and possibly integrate into their own identity (Bennett & Bennett, 2004). In order to do so, however, Bennett (1979) expressed that we should remove the boundaries that exist between ourselves and others when creating our identity.

Criticisms of the DMIS. The DMIS does not exist without criticism of its applicability, particularly with the fact that Bennett seems to imply a systematic and predictable nature of development (Anderson et al., 2006). While the DMIS presents a rational progression through cultural understanding and sensitivity, human behaviors rarely follow predictable patterns (Zafar et al., 2013). In areas of intercultural sensitivity that do not occur in a linear fashion (e.g., second language acquisition) some scholars have argued that the DMIS may not apply (Liddicoat et al., 2003).

STSAs & the DMIS. Students have opportunities to create new knowledge of the world during STSAs through authentic experiences (Gaudelli, 2009; Gibbs, 2015; Wallace Fuentes, 2015; Smith et al., 2014). When encountering new situations, students in foreign countries often adjust their schemas (Buckingham et al., 2000; Ritz, 2011). Immersion programs that place students in a culture which they can fully experience can increase the likelihood that they increase intercultural sensitivity along Bennett’s model (Anderson et al., 2006) as immersion “provides opportunities for individuals to experience a shift of perspective and an appreciation for both the diversity and commonalities among human beings” (Fantini, 2000).

Bioecological Theory

Under the Constructivist framework that forms the foundation of the Transformative Learning Theory and the Developmental Model of Intercultural sensitivity, prior experience and dispositions influence how individuals build their knowledge and understanding of the world. In an attempt to explain this influence, Urie Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Theory (BET) describes how various systems in people's lives affect their development. These systems exist in various levels of processing which interact and influence each other in a reciprocal fashion (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). Because this theory implies that everyone sees the world with individual lenses, it can help to explain the differences in how students respond to the experiences that they may have on an STSA exchange. Using this understanding that not all students will experience an STSA in the same way, in this section I will summarize BET and its limitations, and then connect BET to STSAs.

The Theory. According to Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998), interactions between a person's disposition, physical environment, people in the environment, and informational sources influence the development of a person. Under this model, genetics do not "produce finished traits, but rather interact with environmental experience[s] in determining developmental outcomes" (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994) and some of those traits have more influence than others in this interaction (Sontag, 1996). Based on their genetic dispositions, environments influence how individuals perceive and construct their own realities which then influences how these individuals interact with their environments (Hoare, 2008). The various systems include the microsystems (i.e., a person's immediate environment and relationships), the mesosystem (i.e., where the microsystems interact), the exosystem (i.e., elements that influence a person, but are not in constant contact) and the marcosystem (i.e., customs of the culture in

which a person lives) (Kulik, 2007). Each system influences the next. For example, a child may learn politeness from his family (microsystem) and that may influence the child's behavior when spending time with his cousins (exosystem), but the child's cousins (exosystem) may teach him curse words that he then uses at home with his family (microsystem). Over time, these interactions change as people have more experiences which influence their interactions (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015).

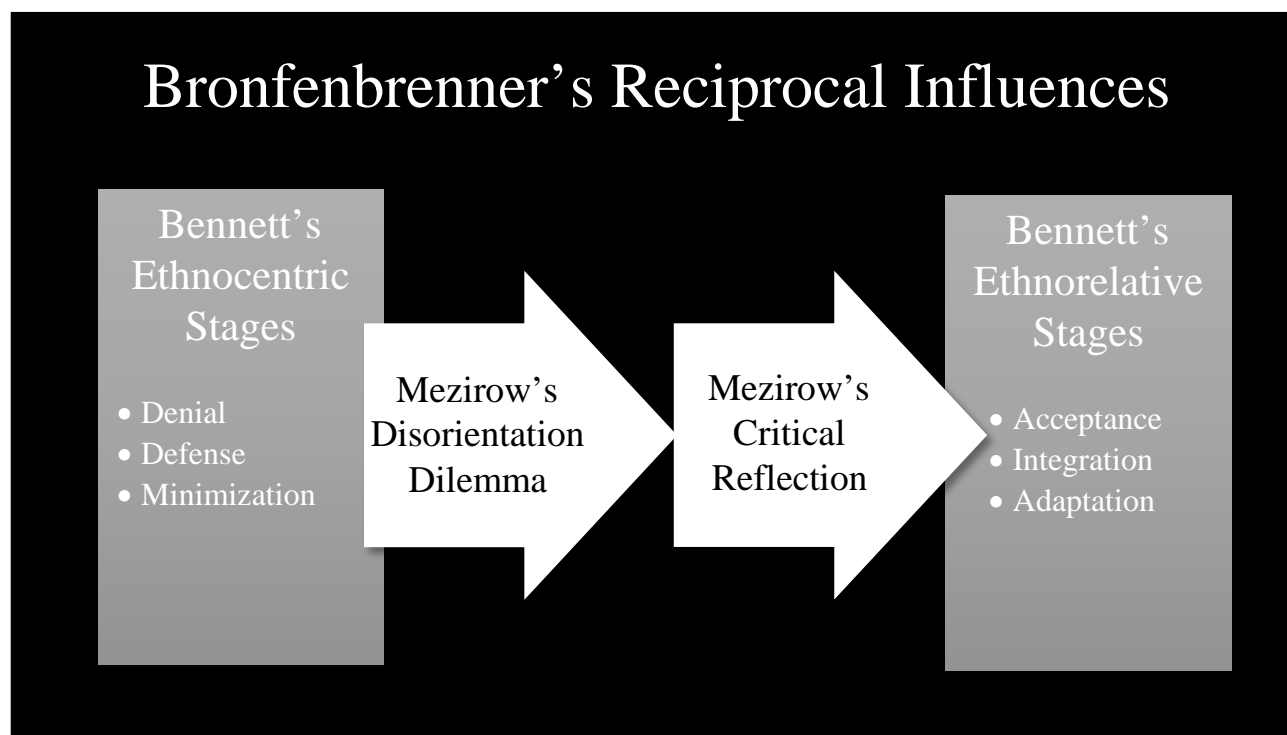
Criticisms. Bronfenbrenner's theory has limitations in that some scholars express that it relies too heavily on cultural relativism. According to Block and colleagues (1971), BET does not seem to take into account common values and behaviors within society in terms of psychological development. According to them, BET does not allow for psychological comparison, which limits "psychologically grounded basis for seeking to change character or the larger society... a rationale that perpetuates what is, rather than what might be" (Block et al., 1971). Critiques such as these argue that BET relies too heavily on context in describing development which limits the ability of psychology to inspire change.

BET and STSAs. Every student that participates in an STSA exchange program will bring an individual personality and disposition to the program. According to BET, each student will interact with the experience in a novel way, and the experience will affect each student differently (Schenker, 2019). For example, shy students may have less of a likelihood of actively engaging their Danish hosts, but very outgoing host families may have the ability to encourage introverted students to open themselves to the experience. At the same time, extroverted students may be able to have better STSA exchange experiences, but restrictive host-families may provide insurmountable obstacles to growth for these students. In terms of this study, BET justifies the

use of qualitative data to investigate growth in intercultural competence as growth for each student may look different depending on internal dispositions.

Integrating the Theories

Transformative Learning Theory provides a sound theoretical framework for my research of the connection between STSAs and the development of intercultural competence in adolescents. Despite Mezirow's focus on adults and adult education, the theory appears to outline the process of culture shock that students may encounter. STSAs should challenge and change cultural and geopolitical schemas held by participants, which mimics the process of TLT. The disorientation and critical reflection of TLT can encourage growth along the DMIS. The interaction between systems of BET could influence the type of disorientation each individual student encounters and how each student may need to reflect in order to overcome a disorientation dilemma. In relation to STSAs, the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity and the Bioecological Theory support the development of intercultural competence in the model of the Transformative Learning Theory. Figure 2.1 illustrates the integration of these theories. Within the context of Bronfenbrenner's reciprocal systems, a learner transforms from ethnocentric to ethnorelative by engaging in critical reflection when confronted with a disorientation dilemma (See figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1*Theoretical Framework Graphic*

Note. This graphic represents the integration of the three theories used for this study. The arrows represent the processes of the Transformative Learning Theory. The gray boxes represent the stages of the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. The black box expresses that students participating in STSAs experience these stages and processes uniquely depending on their reciprocal influences.

Summary

As I discussed in the previous chapter, the world needs interculturally competent people and school curriculum can provide opportunities for students to develop attributes of intercultural competence. Study abroad programs serve as one model of authentic learning that allows students to develop intercultural competence by engaging with foreign cultures. In addition to intercultural competence, study abroad programs have personal benefits for participants. While

longer-term programs of a semester or year offer the most opportunities for intercultural development, shorter-term programs of less than eight weeks do benefit students. If structured well, Short-Term Study Abroad programs can expose students to cultural elements which lead to intercultural competence development. Through teacher mentoring in group and individual sessions, as well as through reflective practices, students can encounter foreign cultures ways that help them to develop intercultural competencies. My research primarily relied upon the Transformative Learning Theory with its disorientation dilemma which forces critical reflection when confronted with a new, difficult, or uncomfortable situation. The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity and Bioecological Theory also informed my theoretical framework as these also state that learners learn best through active experiences, not passive transference.

Chapter III: Methodology

In order to solve many problems facing the modern world, education systems can work to develop culturally competent people with creative and analytical skills, and high levels of empathy. Much of the prior research on study abroad programs supports the idea that Short-Term Study Abroad programs (STSAs) can develop intercultural competence among college students, but a gap in the literature exists regarding secondary students. Because of the lack of information in this area of the literature, my study focused on secondary student experiences with STSAs. I will use this chapter to describe my research design which investigated the relationship of secondary level STSAs and intercultural competency development.

Description of Research Design

Ethnography allows researchers to study cultural groups (e.g., more than one person sharing behavior patterns), using field observation in order to collect data (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). In their studies, ethnographers can collect quantitative and qualitative data in order to interpret the behaviors of a particular cultural group (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). Given the nature of ethnographic studies, researchers become a part of the groups they study which requires them to build trust with their participants to collect the most complete data possible (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). According to LeCompte & Schensul (2010), ethnographic research studies “are built around and told in the words, views, explanations, and interpretations of the participants in the study” (p. 25). Thus, ethnographic researchers base their work on the premise that in order to best understand the behavior or development of a cultural group, one must first understand the context in which that behavior or development takes place (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010).

Ethnographers do not utilize only one data collection method, as they try to draw from many sources in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the culture sharing group (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). In the case study tradition, ethnographers attempt to use all available data sources in order to validate their conclusions (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). Ethnographic research takes significant amounts of time and therefore researchers often have roles within participant groups as participant observers by developing trusting relationships with the participants (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). As the coordinator of the Danish Exchange Program, I qualified as a participant observer in this research study. In my observational role, I used the Global Engagement Measurement Survey (GEMS) (Shadowen et al., 2015), journal entries, group interviews, and individual interviews to collect data for this program in order to gain a complete understanding of the students participating in this exchange.

The Danish Exchange Program

The Danish Exchange Program is a social studies curriculum-aligned program that the school board approves annually. The program does not offer academic credit, and it seeks to develop intercultural competence in students through the utilization of skills and competencies taught in Social Studies and English Classes. While I conducted the research in the spring, the program took place across the entire academic year. The coordinating teachers informed students of their acceptance in June and had an introductory meeting where students had an opportunity to meet each other through various ice-breaking activities.

For the first part of the exchange year, the Danish students come to the United States at the end of October for 13 days. Prior to their arrival, the American students attended three 90-minute long meetings, where students focused on topics that helped facilitate the development of intercultural competence. In the first meeting, students considered their own cultural attributes

and how different actions could affect their senses of culture. The coordinating teachers placed special emphasis on observing and acknowledging cultural differences rather than passing judgement. During the second meeting, students focused on the specific cultural differences of the United States and Denmark. The third and final meeting provided a forum for questions regarding the experience as well as a detailed overview of the schedule of events for the Danes' stay in the United States.

During the American leg of the exchange, the Danish students lived at the homes of their American partners. The Danish students shadowed their American partners through school by attending all of their partners' classes. In a typical year, students have two excursion days with which they visit sites of national, regional, or cultural significance. For the exchange during the year of this research, students traveled to Philadelphia to visit Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell, as well as to take self-guided tours of Center City. Additionally, students traveled to Washington D.C. in order to meet with a representative who worked for Danish Ambassador to the United States and to walk through the Smithsonian Institution museums and monuments on the National Mall. The coordinating teachers arranged various events during this 13-day period which provided opportunities for community growth with the students and their families including a barbeque and a banquet at the end of the exchange.

In the spring, prior to traveling to Denmark, the American students in the exchange attended three 90-minute meetings that occurred weekly in the three weeks before departure. These meetings aimed to further develop student intercultural competence by exposing them to the types of experiences that they might expect to have while in Denmark. The first meeting provided an opportunity for students to re-acquaint themselves with each other in the program and discuss current events in Denmark. At this meeting, the coordinating teachers provided

students with procedures for getting and completing work while in Denmark. During the second meeting, the teachers conducted a Danish history lesson for students that includes the Viking Age, post-World War II era, and the development of the Danish Welfare State. Students then discussed cultural differences in groups by listing things they found different about the Danes and things the Danes found different about them. This activity led to a discussion of cultural relativity. The third meeting occurred one week prior to departure and prepared students for the specific logistics of their time in Denmark. The coordinating teachers led a presentation about the significance of the sites they would visit while in Denmark, as well as the experiences students could expect at the school. At this final meeting, the students also participated role playing activities in order to practice situations that they could encounter while living in another person's house.

The American students traveled to Denmark for 10 days at end of March and beginning of April. As in the fall, the American students lived with their Danish partners for the duration of their stay. Students attended school with their partners, but because Danish high school uses a cohort model, the Danish and American teachers planned lessons for all of the students together which allowed students to engage with each other about the similarities and differences between Danish and American cultures. Topics for this particular exchange included Danish history, comparative religiosity, comparative economics, comparative government, the Danish Dream vs. the American Dream, and classes designed for processing the experience of the exchange through poetry and small group discussions. Typically, students will take excursions to sites of historical and cultural significance. This year's trips included Copenhagen and Kroneborg Castle in Helsingør. The American students, their Danish partners, and their host families attended a banquet at the end of the exchange.

Through this study I investigated the experiences of a culture sharing group of high school students as they developed intercultural competences while participating in a Short-Term Study Abroad program. With the participants on the exchange collectively acting as a culture sharing group, I investigated patterns of behavior that existed among these students.

Participant Selection

Students comprised the only level for this study's unit of analysis, as my research question only examined the experiences of students in Short Term Study Abroad programs (Cresswell & Guetterman, 2019). The population for this study was high school juniors and seniors who participated in STSAs. This study utilized a convenience sample because I used students who had already chosen to take part in the Danish Exchange Program in a mid-Atlantic school district, which, in turn, limits my ability to generalize the results to my target population (Cresswell & Guetterman, 2019).

Participants in this study took part in a Danish Exchange Program that served students from two large, comprehensive, suburban high schools in the northeastern United States. Participants self-selected and applied to enroll in the program for their junior or senior year of high school. The application process included a personal information form that has three short essays. For the essays students answered the following:

1. Why would you be a good candidate for the Danish Exchange Program?
2. How would your exchange partner benefit from being with your family?
3. In your opinion, what makes taking part in an exchange program beneficial?

In addition to the application form and essays, students provided three letters of recommendation. Two letters came from teachers who have had the students in their classes, and one letter came from a non-teacher such as a coach, boss, scout leader, religious leader, or

someone outside of the school setting who was not in a student's family and could attest to their character. Finally, students had an interview with the teachers who coordinate the exchange. The coordinating teachers chose students based on the quality of essay responses in terms of understanding of the goals of the program, discipline records, interpersonal skills as evidenced by the interview, and the ability to complete schoolwork based on teacher recommendations. Acceptance did not require enrollment in a specific course or academic track. Participation numbers depended on the number of students enrolled in the program at the Danish high school. The program did not require that the number of American students equal the number of Danish students. Only students who met the criteria for acceptance could participate which made it possible that the program could admit fewer Americans than Danes.

I used scores from the GEMS (Shadowen et al., 2015) pre-test to identify the students who participated in the interviews following the end of the program. Six students who were closest to the mean score each met for one hour interviews. Students had the opportunity to take part or refuse the interview. All six identified students participated in the interviews.

Procedures

Data collection for this research study occurred during the Danish leg of the exchange in the spring semester. Three weeks prior to leaving for Denmark I hosted an information session for the parents of the students participating in the Danish Exchange Program. At this meeting I reviewed with parents the procedures for traveling to Denmark including travel logistics, rules and expectations, and the schedule of events. Next, I described my research study and informed the parents of the conditions of informed consent so that they could complete consent forms (See Appendices E and F) for their students. Every parent consented to allowing their child to participate in the study.

Next, students took part in the 3 evening sessions described earlier that each lasted 90-minutes. At the first meeting, which occurred two days after the parent meeting and exactly three weeks prior to departure, students completed assent forms (See Appendix E) to participate in the study. All 29 students provided their assent. During the meeting we discussed goals of the Danish leg and current events in Denmark. At the end of the meeting, students completed the GEMS (Shadowen et al., 2015). The next two meetings, each taking place two weeks and one week prior to departure, covered the topics of Danish history, Danish and American cultural differences, logistics of our specific trip, and topics relevant to the exchange including sites we would visit and how to live in another person's home.

One week after the completion of the final student meeting, the exchange left for Denmark. On Monday, after four days in Denmark, the students completed their first three journal entries. During the fourth and fifth days, I divided students into 2 groups of 10 and 1 group of 9 to participate in the group intervention sessions. On the plane back to the United States, the students completed their final journal entry. Within one week of returning to the United States, the students individually dedicated time to complete the GEMS as a post-survey. Within one month of returning home I interviewed six students in one hour individual sessions regarding their experiences.

Instrumentation

While study abroad research tends to focus assessments on quantitative methods (Anderson et al., 2015; Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004; Gaia, 2015; Goldstein, 2019; Heinzmann et al., 2015; Shadowen et al., 2015; Salisbury et al., 2013; Stemler et al., 2014; Williams, 2015) or qualitative methods (Engelking, 2018; Hamilton et al., 2019; Jewet, 2010; Nguyen, 2014; Ritz, 2011) some studies highlight the benefits for study abroad assessment to undergo a mixed

methods approach (Paras et al., 2019; Sklad, et al., 2016). Paras and colleagues (2019) found that holistic assessment measures can best understand student learning that takes place by informing researchers not just if intercultural development takes place, but how, when, and why it takes place. This section will describe the mixed methods data that I collected before, during, and after the time spent in Denmark.

Quantitative Instruments. In order to collect quantitative data, I utilized the Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS) (See Appendix A) developed for the University of Delaware's Institute of Global Studies (Shadowen et al., 2015). Shadowen and colleagues (2015) developed the GEMS in order to create a STSA assessment to measure growth in intercultural competence. With a wide variety of STSA programs that all have differing academic objectives, the GEMS provided a “theoretically based... psychometrically validated” and “publicly available” assessment to measure these various programs (Shadowen et al., 2015, p. 232). The GEMS developers utilized multiple researchers' studies into intercultural competence to identify four major constructs: cultural engagement, tolerance for ambiguity, knowledge of the host site, and diversity openness (Shadowen et al., 2015).

Qualitative Instruments. By using journals, individual interviews, and group interviews, I hoped to uncover a deep understanding into the experiences of the students participating in the Danish Exchange Program (Lichtman, 2013). These journals, interviews, and group intervention sessions allowed me to have greater access to the subjective experiences of the students in a way that the survey I used did not allow. (Astroth & Chung, 2018). While the GEMS gave me an indication of the occurrence of measurable changes in intercultural competence, the journals, group interviews, and individual interviews helped to make meaning of any change that took

place (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2017; Sklad et al., 2015). In this subsection I describe the qualitative methods for collecting data that I used in this study.

Journal Entries. Journal entries provided one source of qualitative data. I provided students with four journal prompts upon arriving in Denmark (See Appendix P). Following the first weekend, students answered the following prompts:

- a. After having spent the first weekend in Denmark describe your thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and reactions to what you have experienced.
- b. Describe your positive experiences. (Describe what has been easy, fun, enlightening, etc.)
- c. Describe your negative experiences. (Describe what has been difficult, confusing, unpleasant, etc.)

On the plane home, students completed the final prompt: “Now that you are leaving Denmark, describe the significance of this experience for you including the highlights and the lowlights.” Students had no requirement to complete the journal entries nor did they have any length specifications. Because identification could affect the responses, students handwrote the journals and submitted them without their names. This anonymous journaling allowed for students to avoid social pressures in discussion and write on their own terms. By removing length expectations and identifiers, I hoped to receive what Wong (2018) referred to as “honest” “ignorant” and “courageous” reflections that sought to provide authentic feelings rather than thoughts meant to impress me or other students (p. 49).

Group Interviews. Students took part in group interview sessions in order to help process their experiences. These sessions served as interventions intended to guide students through the successes and challenges of their intercultural development through intellectual scaffolding (Bell & Anscombe, 2013; Jewet, 2010; Hall et al., 2016; Smith et al., 2014; Vande Berg et al., 2015).

With 29 students participating in the study, I divided them into three groups: 2 groups had 10 participants and 1 group had 9 participants. I met with two groups right after the first weekend on the fourth day of the exchange and one group on the fifth day. From the end of the first day until the beginning of the fourth day, students had no official activities related to the program, so they had opportunities to experience Denmark on their own schedules with their partners. After this period, students reported spending time in Copenhagen, attending host family events, and many more activities. By choosing the fourth and fifth days, it ensured that students had opportunities to engage with the culture, while leaving time for more experiences before traveling home. I utilized a Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) group approach (Ivey et al., 2007) so as to challenge student responses in order to identify their disorientations and obstacles to overcome. Many therapists use CBT in their practices in order to help clients cope with their environment, develop assertiveness, and develop social skills for specific situations (Ivey et al., 2007). All of the above scenarios apply to various parts of student experiences in Denmark. During the group interviews I asked questions in the manner of a CBT session in order to help students make specific and concrete their thoughts and behaviors so that they could directly understand and address the challenges they felt in a foreign environment (Ivey et al., 2007). Through the use of CBT techniques, I then had the ability to help students reconstruct their worldview based on their experiences in Denmark (Ivey et al., 2007).

Post-Exchange Individual Interviews. As previously mentioned, I interviewed six students within one month of returning from Denmark. With the solo interviews, there was a possibility that students answered questions in a manner that they perceived would impress me as the interviewer (Wong, 2015; Wong, 2018). In order to reduce the chances of this manipulation, I used a semi-structured interview model where I had questions prepared, but I allowed for the

conversation to deviate from the questions in order to allow the students to fully develop their thoughts. Utilizing semi-structured interviews can help interviewees to provide authentic answers not intended to impress the interviewer (Conzelmann & Key, 2014; Bariball & White, 1994). Like the group sessions, I utilized CBT questioning for the purposes of helping students to clarify and make concrete their thoughts about their time in Denmark (Ivey et al., 2007).

Threats to Validity and Reliability

For the purposes of my research, I utilized ethnographic methods in order to describe the experiences of students participating in the Danish Exchange Program. As with any study, ethnographic methods do have threats to validity and reliability. Validity refers to the ability of instrumentation to measure what it purports to measure, while reliability refers instrumentation consistency with regards to its measurement. This section will review the validity and reliability of the ethnographic methods I employed in this study.

Internal Validity

Internal validity refers to research measuring what researchers believe it measures (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). Researchers using ethnography work in a natural setting that changes over time, which can mean that what researchers may have an ability to gather the same results using the same methods in a future study because of the dynamics of this methodology (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). Each year a new group of students takes part in the exchange program. From one year to the next, these new students bring with them their own lenses which influences how they view their experiences in Denmark. Considering this possible variation, an individual student could potentially have a different experience in a different year with a different partner. This study though, sought to describe the experience of this particular group of students, not the experience of all students.

Positionality. The positionality of researchers in the participant group may also influence observed behaviors (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982) which then impacts a researcher's ability to determine validity. As the coordinator of the exchange program I developed relationships with participating students. Students may have altered their responses due to this relationship, but my prior relationships with these students also allowed me to recognize inconsistencies in behavior and appropriately seek clarity to or challenge their statements.

Researcher Behavior. Ethnographic researchers should maintain an appropriate distance from the study so as to ensure accurate observations (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). At the same time, ethnographic results may succumb to the influence of researcher bias or misperceptions (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). As the coordinator of the exchange I have an interest in the program's success, but in order to maintain objectivity I analyzed data with my advisor so as to avoid bias in my interpretation.

External Validity

According to LeCompte and Goetz (1982), external validity refers to the ability of the research data obtained to generalize to other groups (p.43). Data collected in an ethnographic study may describe that specific study's group, but not apply to any other group (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). The context of a study including setting and environmental factors may produce results for a group that would not develop if any contextual information changed (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). While other high schools have exchange programs to other countries, the American and Danish high schools participating in this exchange have characteristics which other schools may not share. Student experiences would not necessarily translate to other settings because of these unique characteristics and how they interact with the program. As previously

mentioned, I tried to describe the experience of this particular group of students, not generalize to other groups.

Reliability. Reliability refers to whether or not a research study will provide consistent data when repeating its methods. (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). Issues with replication, subjectivity, and the context of the research limit the reliability of ethnographies. This study may have reliability issues due to the above listed factors.

Replication. Replication represents one aspect of ethnography which critics contend limits its reliability (LeCompte & Goetz, 1992). LeCompte and Goetz (1982) stated that “even the most exact replication of [ethnographic] research methods may fail to produce identical results” (p. 35). Ethnography occurs in a natural setting which removes researcher control of confounding variables, providing an obstacle to reliability as minimal control means the natural setting could change in a replicated study and thus offer different results (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). Many factors of the exchange program could have influenced the data collection including: (a) student experiences with their specific partners, (b) opportunities outside of the school day to interact with local culture, (c) prior experience of participating students with foreign cultures, and (d) diversity of family backgrounds. Changing the host family for a student or the year of participation for that student could provide a very different experience for him or her.

Subjectivity. Ethnographic research relies on participant interpretation of experiences. Because these interpretations occur in a subjective manner, critics of ethnographic research question the ability of a study to gather reliable data (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). The qualitative data that I collected relied on student interpretations of their experiences as they related them to me. Though objective in measurement, the quantitative data also relied on students’ subjective

understanding of GEMS items. For this reason, I collected multiple sources of data to triangulate the results in order to determine the most consistency.

A researcher's positionality can alter the results of an ethnography as participants may behave differently depending on how a researcher associates with the subjects or setting of the research (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). As mentioned above, I am the coordinator of the exchange program and have an interest in the success of the program. Students may have reported to me differently than if a researcher with no connection to them or the program conducted the interview. While I cannot control how students respond, this fact also points to the importance of data triangulation.

Context. Informant bias limits a researcher's ability to collect data as the researcher may have an easier time collecting data from one subgroup over another subgroup within the participant group depending on how each subgroup relates to the researcher (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). As a teacher in one of the schools of the exchange, I had multiple students in class. These students whom I taught may have provided more or different information than those whom I did not teach. In this setting though, my role as coordinator can help mitigate this issue as I used my role to develop relationships with all of the students which allowed the students to feel comfortable sharing their thoughts regardless of if they knew or did not know me prior to the exchange.

Participants may also selectively choose what information they deem appropriate to share with the researcher (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). When students left school at the end of the day while in Denmark, I, as the teacher, did not accompany them anywhere. Students may have had experiences which they deemed inappropriate to share with me that could have influenced their intercultural development. Without such information, I may not completely understand the

effects of their time in Denmark. Again, I have no control over what students share or do not share. By collecting a large amount of data and in multiple forms, I hopefully decreased the chances that the omitted information had an effect on my results.

Data Collection Procedures

In order to provide the most comprehensive results, I collected multiple sources of data. Pre- and post-surveys, travel journals, individual interviews, and group interviews provided me with data for this study. In this section I will describe how I analyzed the qualitative and quantitative data.

Data Triangulation

Triangulation involves using multiple sources of data in order to check accuracy and ensure researchers can draw appropriate conclusions (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). For this study on the Short-Term Study Abroad exchange program I used four sources of data including (a) pre- and post-surveys, (b) travel journals with four prompts, (c) group intervention, and (d) individual interviews. Each of these sources of data helped to validate each other (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010).

Data Collection Schedule

Three weeks prior to students departing for Denmark I administered the Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS) (Shadowen et al., 2015) as a pre-survey at the first pre-departure meeting for the students. Monday after the first weekend, which was also four days after our arrival in Denmark, the students completed their first journal entries: (a) “After having spent the first weekend in Denmark, describe your thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and reactions to what you have experienced,” (b) “Describe your positive experiences. (Describe what has been easy, fun, enlightening, etc.),” and (c) “Describe your negative experiences. (Describe what has

been difficult, confusing, unpleasant, etc.).” The American students had a 90-minute study hall during which time they completed the journals entries. On the same day as the first journal entries, and the day after, I conducted 1-hour group intervention sessions with 2 groups of 10 students, and 1 group with 9 students. On the flight home (tenth day) The students completed the final journal entry: “Now that you are leaving Denmark, describe the significance of this experience for you including the highlights and the lowlights.” During the week following the exchange, students came to my classroom at their convenience and completed the GEMS as a post survey. Over the course of the three weeks following students returning home, I conducted the 1-hour long interview sessions after completion of the school day.

Analysis and Coding Procedures

As with many studies which use ethnographic methods, my research collected various forms of quantitative and qualitative data. In order to analyze the quantitative data from the GEMS (Shadowen et al., 2015), I used a paired-samples t-Test as this method allows for comparison of a group or individuals at two different times (i.e., a pre-test and post-test). For the qualitative data I coded using the intercultural competence characteristics found in the GEMS (Shadowen et al., 2015) and Mezirow’s (1993; 1997) Transformative Learning Theory. In this section I will describe the analysis and coding procedures that I utilized for the data which I collected.

Quantitative Data Analysis

In order to collect quantitative data, I utilized the Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS) developed at the University of Delaware for use with the university’s Short-Term Study Abroad programs through the Institute for Global Studies (Shadowen et al., 2015). Pre- and post-surveys provide valuable data to researchers looking to quantify changes in the cultural

understanding of participants (Anderson & Lawton, 2015; Shadowen et al., 2015; Stemler et al., 2014) and the GEMS offered a scale that seemed accessible to high school students because the scenarios appeared to reflect experiences of high school students. The survey measured student intercultural competence across the duration of the exchange program. Using IBM's SPSS Statistics software, I conducted a paired-samples T-test to investigate the quantitative data yielded through the GEMS (Shadowen, Chieffo, & Guerra, 2015) as this method of analysis analyzes changes from pre-tests to post-tests (Kent State University Libraries [KSUL], 2019).

Qualitative Data Analysis

Using the qualitative data collected, I had an opportunity to understand the experiences of students regarding the exchange through their own words. The journals, group interviews, and individual interviews offered first-person accounts of their time in Denmark. Using coding procedures, I analyzed the impact of the Danish Exchange Program on student intercultural competence development.

Coding involves the organization and categorization of qualitative data (LeCompte & Schensul, 1997). Using the Dedoose software, I uploaded transcripts of the journal entries, interviews, and group intervention sessions in order to organize and categorize the data from these sources which provided information regarding student development of intercultural competence. In order to remain consistent with the chosen characteristics of the intercultural competence construct, I began this with a pre-coded system with the elements of intercultural competence which Shadowen and colleagues (2015) used in developing the GEMS including: (a) cultural engagement, (b) tolerance for ambiguity, (c) knowledge of the host site, (d) diversity openness, and (e) resilience. As Mezirow's (1993; 1997) Transformative Learning Theory provided the major portion of my theoretical framework, I used two of his major constructs as

codes as well: (a) disorientation dilemma and (b) critical self-reflection. These codes, derived from journal, individual interview, and group interview transcriptions, allowed me to identify the development of intercultural competence.

With the qualitative data coded, I evaluated the experiences of students on the Short-Term Study Abroad exchange program by analyzing patterns among the students' responses in relation to intercultural competence. In order to validate the responses I triangulated the data with the survey responses.

Limitations

As previously mentioned, I selected participants for this study through an application process. Various factors influenced whether students chose to apply to the including their ability to pay for the program, academic track, and previous commitments to activities in and out of school. This application process did not allow for a random sampling procedure to occur which researchers require for the generalizability of data (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). The unique characteristics of this exchange including student dispositions, weather conditions conducive to a wide range of activities beyond the walls confining the school and student homes, and even student perceptions and understanding of current events provided variables that a researcher could not replicate easily if at all (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). My role as the coordinator in the exchange and as a teacher in the school where the exchange took place can limit the results (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). Student behavior and responses may have changed in order to please me as the coordinator or as a current or future teacher of participants.

Informed Consent and Protection of Human Subjects

In order to obtain informed consent, I held a meeting with parents of the participants three weeks prior to student departure to Denmark. At this meeting I provided parents with

informed consent forms. Prior to signing the forms, I informed parents that student participation in my research would include a pre- and post-survey (GEMS), group interviews, journal entries, and a possibility for an individual interview upon returning from the exchange. All parents of participants gave consent for their children to participate. Two days after the parent meeting, at the first student meeting, participants had the opportunity to sign forms giving their assent to participate. All students in the exchange program assented to participation in the study.

In order to protect confidentiality, informed consent forms, survey responses, and transcriptions of interview recordings were kept on a password-protected computer and stored in a locked closet in my classroom. In order to protect student identities, I assigned pseudonyms to participants. Three years after the completion of the study, I will destroy the collected data.

Summary

Through this research I studied the relationship of participation in a Short-Term Study Abroad exchange program to the development of intercultural competence. The students participated in an exchange with a school in Denmark through which they hosted their Danish partners for 13 days in the fall and stayed with their partners in Denmark for 10 days in the spring. For this study I utilized ethnographic methods in order to detail the experiences of the students as a culture sharing group. Data collection methods included utilization of the Global Engagement Measurement Scale (Shadowen et al., 2015) to collect pre- and post-travel quantitative data, 4 journal entries while traveling, group interview sessions while in Denmark, and 6 individual interviews following travel to Denmark. Despite the limitations of ethnography, this methodology provided an in depth understanding of intercultural development growth for students participating in the exchange.

Chapter IV: Results

In this chapter, I will examine the data related to experiences of high school students participating in a Short-Term Study Abroad (STSA) exchange program to Denmark. Through this mixed-methods study I sought to answer the question: How are students' experiences on Short-Term Study Abroad Immersion programs intertwined with the development of their intercultural competence?

Using the Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS) (Shadowen et al., 2015), I collected quantitative data as a pre- and a post-test to identify differences in intercultural competence that occurred over the course of the exchange. The GEMS has 5 subscales: (a) Cultural Engagement, (b) Tolerance for Ambiguity, (c) Knowledge of the Host Site, (d) Diversity Openness, and (e) Resilience. Using a paired samples t-Test I analyzed the GEMS data as this measure allowed me to compare means from the same group or individual at two different times, or in the case of this study, before and after the trip to Denmark (Kent State, 2019).

I collected qualitative data through student journals, individual interviews, and group interviews. To include in the data, 24 of 29 participants returned their journals which consisted of 4 entries. Students completed 3 entries after the first weekend in Denmark. They completed the final entry on the plane ride home. For group interviews, I divided students into 3 groups of 9 or 10 students. Group interviews took place on the fourth and fifth days of the exchange and lasted for 45 to 60 minutes. Lastly, 6 students completed a 45-minute individual interview. These 6 students had scores in the middle of the of the GEMS pre-test.

In order to code the qualitative data, I began with the subscales of the GEMS and major components of the Transformative Learning Theory (TLT). Based on Mezirow's (1993;1997) theory, I coded for instances of (a) disorientation and (b) critical reflection. Using the GEMS, I

coded for occurrences of (a) Cultural Engagement, (b) Tolerance for Ambiguity, (c) Knowledge of the Host Site, (d) Diversity Openness, and (e) Resilience. Multiple subthemes emerged within these themes. While students had varying specific experiences, the data revealed these common themes amongst them. In this chapter I will describe the data collected through the GEMS and the qualitative sources.

GEMS and Subscale Data

The GEMS (Shadowen et al., 2015) provided quantitative data for my study regarding the experiences of students on an STSA exchange program to Denmark. Students completed the GEMS as a pre-test one month prior to leaving for Denmark and before the pre-departure meetings. Within a week of returning from Denmark, students completed the GEMS as a post-test.

Data analysis revealed a statistically significant difference in intercultural competence as reported on the GEMS between the pre-test ($M=134.3600$, $SD=11.60417$) and the post-test ($M=143.4800$, $SD=8.7562$), $t(24)=-4.408$, $p<.001$. Students reported a statistically significant decrease in Tolerance for ambiguity on the post-test ($M=20.6071$, $SD=3.76474$) than on the pre-test ($M=17.5714$, $SD=2.98674$), $t(27)=4.844$, $p<.001$. With regards to knowledge of Denmark, students reported a statistically significant increase in knowledge on the post-test ($M=15.8621$, $SD=2.60116$) than on the pre-test ($M=9.4828$, $SD=4.24786$), $t(28)=-8.091$, $p<.001$. Students reported on the post-test ($M=38.5000$, $SD=2.91548$) an increase in cultural engagement than on the pre-test ($M=38.1923$, $SD=2.91548$), $t(25)=-5.50$, $p=.587$. For the combined subscale of openness to diversity, students reported on the post-test ($M=49.9655$, $SD=2.61155$) a statistically significant increase in openness as compared to the pre-test ($M=48.7931$, $SD=4.43508$), $t(28)=-2.112$, $p<.05$. The friends subscale also had a student-reported statistically significant

increase in openness to diversity from the pre-test ($M=26.0345$, $SD=2.89683$) to the post-test ($M=27.0690$, $SD=1.27982$), $t(28)=-2.079$, $p=.05$. The sibling's spouse subscale did not have a statistically significant difference, but students did report on the post-test ($M=22.8966$, $SD=1.75956$) an increase in openness to diversity than on the pre-test ($M=22.7586$, $SD=1.80585$), $t(28)=-.660$, $p=.515$. Lastly, students reported on the post-test ($M=17.0345$, $SD=2.21170$) an increase in resilience than the pre-test ($M=16.9310$, $SD=2.34416$), $t(28)=-.264$, $p=.794$. Table 4.1 illustrates the mean and standard deviation for the entire GEMS, each of the GEMS subscales, and the combined subscales related to Openness to Diversity.

Table 4.1

GEMS Composite and Subscale Composites Descriptive Statistics

| | | Mean | SD |
|--|-----------|----------|----------|
| Gems Scale | Pre-Test | 134.3600 | 11.60417 |
| | Post-Test | 143.4800 | 8.75652 |
| Cultural Engagement | Pre-Test | 38.1923 | 2.88471 |
| | Post-Test | 38.5000 | 2.91548 |
| Ambiguity Tolerance | Pre-Test | 20.6071 | 3.76474 |
| | Post-Test | 17.5714 | 2.98674 |
| Knowledge of the Host Site | Pre-Test | 9.4828 | 4.24786 |
| | Post-Test | 15.8621 | 2.60116 |
| Openness to Diversity | Pre-Test | 48.7931 | 4.43508 |
| | Post-Test | 49.9655 | 2.61155 |
| Openness to Diversity: Potential Friends | Pre-Test | 26.0345 | 2.89683 |
| | Post-Test | 27.0690 | 1.27982 |
| Openness to Diversity: Sibling's Spouse | Pre-Test | 22.7586 | 1.80585 |
| | Post-Test | 22.8966 | 1.75956 |
| Resilience | Pre-Test | 16.9310 | 2.34416 |
| | Post-Test | 17.0345 | 2.21170 |

In addition, Table 4.2 provides the paired samples statistics for the entire GEMS, each of the GEMS subscales, and the combined subscales related to Openness to Diversity.

Table 4.2***GEMS Composite and Subscale Composites Paired Samples t-Test***

| | t | df | Sig. |
|--|--------|----|---------|
| GEMS Scale | -4.408 | 24 | .000*** |
| Cultural Engagement | -5.50 | 25 | .587 |
| Ambiguity Tolerance | 4.844 | 27 | .000*** |
| Knowledge of the Host Site | -8.091 | 28 | .000*** |
| Openness to Diversity | -2.112 | 28 | .044* |
| Openness to Diversity: Potential Friends | -2.079 | 28 | .047* |
| Openness to Diversity: Sibling's Spouse | -.660 | 28 | .515 |
| Resilience | -.264 | 28 | .794 |

Note: *Statistically significant at $p < .05$, ** Statistically significant at $p < .01$, *** Statistically significant at $p < .001$

Experiencing Disorientation

According to the Transformative Learning Theory, learning takes place when students find themselves confronted with feelings of disorientation (Mezirow, 1993). Through critical reflection, students overcome these feelings in order to make unfamiliar situations more comfortable and normal for them (Mezirow, 1993). Throughout their 10 days in Denmark, many of the students in this study encountered disorienting situations that forced them to confront their discomfort. A few subthemes emerged from the individual interviews, group interviews, and many of the journal entries including: (a) structured schedules and expectations, (b) differences in manners, (c) unfamiliar environment, households, and partners, and (d) language barriers.

Structured Schedules and Expectations

When traveling to an unfamiliar environment, people will encounter unsuspected differences and view those differences through a familiar lens. Uncovering differences in free time emerged as a universal theme for the exchange participants. The American students expressed frustration regarding their perceptions that their Danish partners did not prepare for

their trip and did not seem to care about their stay in Denmark. To the American students, they had done the complete opposite for their Danish partners when they had visited in the fall.

Wanting to be a Tourist. Wallace Fuentes (2015) described a phenomenon among STSA students called the “vacation filter” which refers to a tendency for students to see their educational travel experience as a trip centered around enjoyment and entertainment. Often the students view their sojourn abroad as an opportunity to play tourist and see all of the sites of their host environments. Students of Gen Z may look for the perfect picture to post on social media and those participating in STSAs may not have the time to naturally move past this filter which obstructs their idea of the authentic elements of a place’s culture.

Students expressed a desire to see the important attractions of Copenhagen, but they perceived that their partners cheated them out of an experience to do so. During an excursion to Kroneborg Castle, limited time left students making a choice about spending time in the castle or finding a place to eat lunch. Some of the American students stated that their partners left them unable to fully experience the castle by rushing them through its rooms and exhibits in order to get to lunch (Christina Interview). To many of the students this type of experience felt like “wasted” time that could have allowed them to experience more of the sights (Stephanie Journal). Another student wrote that the Danes “tended to do what they wanted to do, not what we wanted to do” (Kerry Journal).

The close proximity to Copenhagen of Swedish cities Malmö and Helsingborg allowed students to organize a day trip over the first weekend. On this excursion, however, many of the Americans described feelings of disappointment as the trip ended as a day at the mall: “We were like, we don’t want to shop, we didn’t come to Copenhagen...we didn’t come to Sweden to

shop” (Group 2 Interview). Students expressed a general feeling of frustration noting that this day trip did not represent their idea of “solid plans” (Stephanie Journal).

For many of the students, this exchange was their first time out of the United States and so they wanted to see as many sites of cultural and historical significance as possible. Some students feared missing the opportunity to see the Little Mermaid statue, Nyhavn, or Frederiksborg because they may never return to Denmark. Jen expressed this sentiment and stated that she was “very on edge” because she “wanted to do something [since]...I don’t know if I’ll ever go make to Denmark [sic]...So I want to make the most out of my experience” (Jen Interview). Some students did express an ability to suspend their desire to see traditional tourist sites. For example, Bari and Kerry stated that this experience allowed them to live Danish lives (Bari Interview; Kerry Interview), but Bari did note that she had a list of spots that she would go back to see if she ever returned to Denmark. Despite the exchange’s goals of learning through immersion, students still wanted to have time as tourists.

Unstructured and Uncaring. As with most high school students, few of the participants in this exchange program have experienced full immersion in a foreign culture. Being their first experience in an immersion setting, students found themselves working to overcome the discomfort resulting from differences they face. In the individual interviews, group interviews, and journals, students consistently discussed their frustrations regarding how the Danes did not seem to care enough to develop a detailed schedule for the 10-day visit.

Frustration. According to the individual interviews, group interviews, and journals, the majority of American students in this exchange expected their partners to develop detailed, very scheduled plans. In 17 students provided specific statements of frustration over a lack of scheduling in their journal entries, including “the Danes are unprepared” (Megan Journal) and

this lack of preparation is “irritating” (Amanda Journal). Other students reported that the Danes generally “lacked planning skills compared to us” (Kerry Journal) and that “they do not seem to be as accommodating as us” (Megan Journal). Similarly, in group sessions, students expressed feelings of stress over this lack of preparation (Group 2), and as though their time was “aimless” (Group 3). These feelings led students to compare the actions of the Danish students to their expectations. In the Group 3 Interview, two different students stated that they believed that they cared more and planned better for the Danes’ visit in the fall (Group 3).

Students’ frustration sometimes manifested as outright criticism. In the Group 3 Interview, one student stated, “I understand... you might not know [the train schedule] well, but I feel like you should have that. You should know...I feel like if you’re going to a foreign country you should know what train you’re supposed to take.” Luke, who reported that he enjoyed taking what came his way, expressed criticism of his partner’s lack of planning, “I’m all for exploring the city, but there’s gotta [sic] be a point when we’re like yea, we’re doing this” (Luke Interview).

It’s Just What I’m Used To. Students did begin to process this cultural difference of scheduling and planning themselves. While they may not have all had an ability to eliminate the discomfort themselves, students acknowledged the existence of a difference and expressed that they attempted to refrain from judgement of manners. For example, Jen shared that when planning vacations, her family tends to have such a strict schedule that they need to establish a block of time specifically for free time, and that her family’s structured schedules contributed to her frustration over her perceived lack of scheduling on the part of the Danes (Jen Interview). In the Group 2 Interview, one student expressed how she experiences less stress with a strict schedule, while another student responded that “it’s probably because it’s what we’re used to.” A

third student expressed, “I don’t know if it’s just me or what I’m used to, but I don’t like [too much unstructured time]” (Group 2 Interview). These reflections display an attempt by students reconcile their frustration and the existence of cultural differences.

In a couple of instances, some students perceived a benefit to the how the Danish students did not establish a strict plan to follow. For example, one student in Group 2 stated that the different experience with planning enhanced her time in Denmark:

I think that’s the cultural barrier that we’ve run into. I think that’s where a lot of the frustration’s coming from whenever we talk and even though it is frustrating when I’m in it when I go to talk here [in this group session]...I’m going to say what’s frustrating me because obviously I’m not just going to be rude to the family and be like, ‘cause like I don’t have a reason to be rude. I’m having fun here and like even though the frustrating part that they’re not scheduled like us ... they’re not worrying about being on a time schedule. And our views aren’t butting heads and even though it’s frustrating, it’s my favorite part of the trip. (Group 2 Interview)

In the same vein of enlightenment, another student in the Group 3 Interview said that she had few issues with the scheduling stress because “[the Danish students are] letting us experience what they would do” (Group 2 Interview). While some students reported this sentiment of enjoying the change in pace from their usual experiences, many students reported feelings of frustration.

Manners

Manners are culture specific, but given that manners develop and change, learning every cultural difference prior to travel can prove onerous (Reid, 2012). Part of the immersive experience is to encounter another culture’s customs of acceptable and unacceptable behavior.

Prior to traveling, Bari voiced that she understood that she would encounter differences but she did not know what different manners she would encounter. In general, the main difference in manners the students noticed involved Americans needing to accommodate everyone and Danes acting upon a tendency to keep strangers at an arm's length.

Students reported in their journals and interviews noticing differences in courtesy words and topics that they would not have chosen to discuss, such as politics. Lisa mentioned in her journal that “it is interesting how the Danes do not say please, thank you, or excuse me” (Lisa Journal). Other students stated that they did not hear these courtesy words as much as they would hear in the United States (Bari Journal; Megan Journal). In addition to the perceived lack of what courtesy words, students also reported that they found it rude that the Danes freely expressed their political beliefs (Group 2 Interview; Michelle Journal;). One student even expressed how his mom told him that “you don’t bring up politics in a public setting. You just don’t” (Group 2 Interview). Some students reported discomfort because of the Danish tendency to express dislike for President Trump (Group 2 Interview). The perceived decreased reliance on courtesy words and the open discussion of politics contradicted student expectations based on their own experiences.

American culture encourages superficial expressions of pleasantries to strangers, while Danes do not expect interactions among strangers (Jensen, 2018). Lisa encountered expressed surprise that “when sitting next to a stranger on public transportation, they did not even acknowledge me” (Lisa Journal). A student in Group 3 described similar observations on train rides during which “strangers would go up and just sit next to a random person and...they wouldn’t even acknowledge them... they wouldn’t even say hi to them. And like, normally if I

were to get on the train I would just be like hey, can I sit here... they don't talk at all" (Group 3 Interview).

Unfamiliar Environment, Households, and Partners

Participating in an exchange allows students to experience and become immersed in a foreign environment, but often this new setting can become a source of discomfort (Segal, 2019). Adjusting to household customs of a host family, navigating differences in experiences with a partner, and making sense of new surroundings can all contribute to the discomfort students experience during a short term study abroad. Thus, disorientation can result from students' awareness of these differences and their drive to minimize their accompanying discomfort. For some students in this study, this process of understanding differences developed perceived feelings of appreciation for Danish culture (Bridget Journal; Denise Journal; Jen Journal; Julie Journal; Michelle Journal; Susie Journal).

Host Family Relationships. In their interviews, Luke, Bari, and Kerry discussed some of their thoughts and feelings regarding the opportunity to live with a family different from their own. In a short period, these students had to adjust to the rules and manners adopted by their host families. Leading up to his travel to Denmark, Luke expressed that he had a sense of trepidation anticipating the differences he would encounter (Luke Interview). At the beginning of the trip these differences caused discomfort for both Bari and Kerry (Bari Interview; Kerry Interview). Many of these differences related to personal customs such as how Jen found herself struggling to break her habits in order to better act according to their customs (Jen Interview). While Jen's discomfort came from the direct experience, Kristen's disorientation emerged out of a comfort in daily experiences with her family such as morning hugs from her mom. Expressing similar sentiments as Jen and Kristen, Kerry summarized her discomfort through her statement, "You

have no idea who they are, what they've been through in life. You don't know what their job is, what they do. I think that was the thing I don't want to step out of bounds... You don't know exactly what their boundaries are as a family period" (Kerry Interview). Differences that students encounter while do not include only major cultural elements, but also simple household living behaviors.

Partner Relationships. Though the Danes had come to the United States in the previous fall to live with their partners who are the participants in this study, a trepidation did still exist because the students spent only 10 days together and communicated through social media in the intervening months. Kerry and Christina both expressed feeling skeptical over whether or not they would get along with their partners while in Denmark. In their journal entries, some students revealed that they had disagreed with their Danish partners over small issues, while a few others noted that they did not form strong bonds as they had hoped and expected.

Foreign Environment. Even a good partnership and host family cannot eliminate disorientation resulting from unfamiliar situations and experiences when exploring a host site. While Kristen has visited multiple cities in the United States and Italy with her parents and older brother, she expressed a slight sense of worry about visiting Copenhagen with her partner and believing that she would need to make her own decisions when trying to navigate the city. By the end of the trip, she reported that she did not feel uneasy about not "being in control" (Kristen Interview). Other students described specific incidents during which they perceived a lack of control because of the unfamiliarity of their environment. On the last day, most of the students visited an amusement park in the middle of Copenhagen, Tivoli. At one point in the day, Bari's partner had left to get food without telling her causing a sense of panic as she was in an unfamiliar neighborhood in an unfamiliar city. Similar to Bari's experience, Luke described the

chaos that ensued when the group of students he was with found themselves in the middle of a clash between protestors and homeless residents of Copenhagen. In both of the above situations students experienced strong feelings of discomfort, but managed to put themselves in more comfortable scenarios. Bari found another group to join who would get her to her partner's house if she needed help, and Luke's group made their way to a bus which transported them to a calmer section of the city.

Language Barrier

Though most people who live in Denmark speak English, including all the Danish students who took part in the exchange, a language barrier still exists. While students seemed to appreciate the high level of fluency among the Danish students, Kerry pointed out that their fluency involves formal English, not the slang that American high school students tend to speak (Kerry Interview). Regardless, Jen expressed admiration for her partners' language abilities, "they're so good at English that... I kept forgetting that. I was like, 'Oh my God, tell me if I'm going too fast.' But they're like, 'It's fine, we understand.'" (Jen Interview). Luke, Bari, Kristen, and Kerry did not describe feelings of admiration, but they did discuss the in depth conversations that they had with their partners and host families. In her journal, Blanca stated that the communication was "difficult at times, but I will always remember these lessons" (Blanca Journal).

While the American students did not describe significant language barriers, many of the students expressed that they did not expect their partners to speak Danish as much in their presence (Denise Journal; Jen Journal; Kerry Journal). A student in Group 3 described this tendency as "frustrating" (Group 3 Interview) and Denise expressed that she felt "left out" (Journal). As the trip progressed, some students such as Bari, Kerry, and Jen realized that while

they preferred their partners speak English, they understood the difficulty of always speaking a foreign language and needing to speak in Danish for the sake of efficiency.

Experiencing Disorientation Summary

Disorientation occurs when a person faces an unfamiliar element that causes a sense of discomfort. According to the Transformative Learning Theory, critically reflecting on disorientation allows for learning and growth to take place. During the exchange, students experienced disorientation in many forms including through differences in scheduling, different senses of manners, unfamiliar environments/families/partners, and through a language barrier. While students did at times struggle with confronting these elements, opportunities for critical reflection and understanding did emerge which allowed for transformative learning to occur.

Critical Self-Reflection

A major theme that emerged from the individual interviews, group interviews, and journals aligns with Mezirow's (1993;1997) Transformative Learning Theory. In order for transformative learning to take place, Mezirow (1993; 1997) stated that learners must undergo critical reflection in order to rectify their previously held beliefs with their new learning and understanding. From this process new schemas emerge. Journal entries, interviews, and group interviews reveal that critical reflection took place both during and after the trip. After experiencing the disorientation of new social norms regarding planning and feeling stress, and after processing the cultural differences regarding how Danes schedule their days and experience stress, many of the students reflected on their own practices regarding scheduling and stress. Many of the students considered how their tendencies affected them, and some envisioned changes that they could make for themselves.

For some students, the lifestyle they experienced in Denmark drastically contrasted with their lifestyle in the United States, and they found positive changes they could make. In his interview, Luke stated that at that moment he had too many things on his to-do list after school, but that in Denmark he felt that he could “vibe” with their “laid back” attitude (Luke Interview). Based on his time in Denmark he could recognize the stress that resulted from overscheduling himself.

Jen also reported that she had developed an awareness of her stress. She stated that she doesn’t “make a lot of plans with my friends. I don’t have free time... I acknowledge that the life I lead is very stressful.” While she would like to change her behaviors she also expressed an internal struggle because of the fact that it is “the way I’ve grown up.” In her interview though, she elaborated on areas of change that she would like to see in herself,

We’re very stressed out because we’re like we’re doing all these things we don’t have the time for...and the Danes being the exact opposite, and they have so much free time... Maybe doing it in a way where you could have a break. I’m not stressing out over homework, I could just have a few hours to myself. I can go hang out with friends. I don’t have to be like, “Oh my God, this awful assignment!” (Jen Interview)

In the same critical lens as Luke and Jen, Kerry related her personal family experience with the general American experience as they both compared to what she witnessed with her host family in Denmark. In an activity at school the American students spent time comparing their typical day with their Danish partners. Kerry found that she had very little if any unscheduled time as opposed to her partner who found a significant amount of time each night to sit with her family and talk. Her partner said that she and her family:

...have dinner every single night and they said, “We just sit here and talk, like no phones. We just know what’s going on in each other’s lives.” And I think in our society, especially nowadays it’s like you’re running from practice to take your kids to practice to not even maybe having dinner that night, or stopping at Chick-fil-A on the road and not being able to sit down to know like, how your day was. (Kerry Interview)

She then elaborated on her own family experience, “My mom said it to me last night. It was so sad. She was like, ‘Kerry, you’re constantly running, like I was going to make you dinner and we could just hang out,’ but like I was going out [with friends] and I already had plans [with them] so I felt bad so I’ll go out with [my mom] tonight.” While her partner has a significant amount of time with her parents each night to enjoy each other, Kerry voiced that she wished her family life could be more similar to her host family.

Bari had a similar awakening as Kerry. In comparing her life in the United States to her experience she said:

It was nice ‘cause it’s not as stressful I guess ‘cause like I can assure you as soon as I get home my mom is going to be like, “Do you have rugby tomorrow? We have to go get your nails done tomorrow. We have to make your Gram dinner after that.” But over there it was like, “Welcome home. Do you need to relax? I can make you tea.” Like the first night I got there we had tea with his family. (Bari Interview)

Bari found that her family life in the United States did not afford her the same opportunities to relax as she did with her host family in Denmark.

For Kristen, the experience in Denmark helped her to reflect on a trip she took to Italy the previous summer with her family. She described her family as “really rushed and stressed a lot... like we have to get here at this time and see everything” (Kristen Interview). The less structured

culture and slower pace of Denmark made her aware of her and her family's behaviors and "if you have a mentality like that, you don't like, enjoy it as much." Just as with the other interviewees, Kristen's experience on the exchange allowed for critical self-reflection.

Christina related her experience differently than the other interviewees. She recognized the differences, but in her reflection did not feel comfort in making any major changes to her lifestyle. She said, "I just think I'm not used to it maybe. If I was there for a little bit and got more experience, I'd be fine. Just I grew up with a set schedule... So when I go over there and they don't really have as much of a set schedule it's kinda weird to me" (Christina Interview) While she did not have the same desire for change as her peers, she still did display a critical reflection of her behaviors and tendencies.

The group interviews and journal transcripts also revealed a similar critique of home behaviors. Brendan stated that the source of differences could derive from each country's childhood education. He wrote of the Danish school:

Curriculum put a greater emphasis on mental or "spiritual" well-being than in America...American definition of success that [is] driving the self-destructive demand for "working to death" and over education...America has become notorious for losing faith and benefit in the simple pleasures of every-day life because the modern mindset of "working to death" or "education overdrive" until success too often causes unhealthy stress. (Brendan Journal).

While students complained about the lack of structure among their partners during a group session, one student reflected on how the Danes probably had a similar experience in the United States, "I remember when they were [in the United States] I had no clue what I was doing, kinda like seeing what everyone was doing. Like, last minute [planning] so I know when they were

with us... we never really knew what we were doing” (Group 3 Interview). Though students viewed scheduling issues through their personal lenses, this student engaged in critical reflection in order to better understand her partner’s behavior. In the tradition of the Transformative Learning Theory, the critical reflection of these students follows the disorientation they experience in a new environment.

Cultural Engagement

Traveling to another country provides students with an opportunity to interact with elements of that country’s local culture. Students can meet and socialize with members of the local population, visit businesses, and learn about specific behaviors and attitudes unique to the people of the host country. In the case of an immersion program, students also have the opportunity to see family life from a firsthand perspective. The above experiences increase “cross-cultural awareness” and “captures students’ worldview or attitudes toward cultural differences, diversity, and exchanges” (Shadowen et al., 2015). Cultural engagement promotes “the interconnectedness between various peoples and cultures” (Shadowen et al., 2015). The GEMS results, individual interviews, group interviews, and journals display some changes in Cultural Engagement.

GEMS Subscale: Cultural Engagement

The Cultural Engagement subscale of the GEMS revealed no significant difference from pre-test ($M=134.3600$, $SD=11.60417$) to post-test ($M=143.4800$, $SD=8.75652$), $t(25)=-.550$, $p=.587$. While there were no significant differences between students’ pre- and post-test on 9 of 12 subscale questions, 3 survey questions did have statistically significant differences. For this subscale I will use Bennet’s (2017) categories of ethnocentric and ethnorelative in order to label the questions. Ethnocentric items “are associated with experiencing one’s own culture as more

‘central to reality’” (Bennett, 2017). Ethnorelative items “refer to issues associated with experiencing all cultures as alternative ways of organizing reality” (Bennett, 2017). I categorized GEMS questions 2, 5, 6, 11, and 12 as ethnocentric because they measure student desire to put their country’s beliefs above the values of other countries. The ethnorelative questions are 1, 3, 7, 8, 9, and 10 because these questions yield information regarding student compassion towards other cultures in recognizing that there does not exist one right way to do anything.

Cultural Engagement Ethnocentric Items. None of the items in this category had statistically significant differences between the pre-test and the post-test (See Table 4.3).

Table 4.3

Cultural Engagement Ethnocentric Paired Samples t-Test

| | t | df | Sig. |
|--|--------|----|------|
| People in my home country are entitled to the standard of living they can afford, even if it has a small negative impact on the environment. | 1.000 | 28 | 3.26 |
| I support policies which maintain the present system of distribution of the world’s wealth and resources. | -1.888 | 27 | .070 |
| The needs of my home country and its citizens should be the highest priority when my country’s leaders negotiate with other countries. | 2.34 | 28 | .813 |
| My home country’s values are most likely the best in the world. | -.372 | 27 | .713 |
| I feel irritated when people from other countries do not understand how things are done in my home country. | .902 | 28 | .375 |

Note: *Statistically significant at $p < .05$, ** Statistically significant at $p < .01$, *** Statistically significant at $p < .001$

Students reported on the post-test ($M=2.10$, $SD=.772$) that they were less likely to believe that people in the United States are entitled to the standard of living they can afford, even if it has a small negative impact on the environment than on the pretest ($M=2.28$, $SD=.797$), $t(28)=1.000$,

$p=.326$. Students also reported on the post-test ($M=3.11$, $SD=.629$) that they were more likely to believe that the values of the United States are most likely not the best in the world than on the pre-test ($M=3.07$, $SD=.539$), $t(27)=-.372$, $p=.713$. On the post-test ($M=3.17$, $SD=.602$), students reported feeling more irritated when people from other countries do not understand how things are done in the United States compared to the pre-test ($M=3.28$, $SD=.528$), $t(28)=.902$, $p=.375$. Regarding the needs of the United States and its citizens, students reported on the post-test ($M=2.34$, $SD=0.721$) that they were more likely to believe that these needs should be the highest priority when government leaders negotiate with other countries than on the pre-test ($M=2.38$, $SD=.820$), $t(28)=.234$, $p=.813$. Lastly, students reported on the post-test ($M=2.54$, $SD=.637$) being less likely to support policies which maintain the present system of distribution of the world's wealth and resources than on the pre-test ($M=2.29$, $SD=.854$), $t(27)=-1.888$, $p=.070$.

Cultural Engagement Ethnorelative Items. None of the items in this category had statistically significant differences between the pre-test and the post-test (See Table 4.4).

Table 4.4***Cultural Engagement Ethnorelative Paired Samples t-Test***

| | t | df | Sig. |
|--|--------|----|-------|
| It is interesting to spend time talking with people from other cultures. | -.441 | 28 | .663 |
| In addition to being a citizen of my own country, I think of myself as a global citizen. | 1.000 | 28 | .326 |
| It is important that universities promote understanding among students of varying backgrounds. | -3.28 | 28 | .745 |
| I like trying to understand people's behaviors in the context of their own culture. | -1.442 | 26 | .161 |
| I feel a strong connection with humanity worldwide. | -.225 | 27 | .823 |
| People in my home country can learn from people in other parts of the world. | .000 | 28 | 1.000 |
| I identify as a member of the worldwide community. | -.902 | 28 | .375 |

Note: *Statistically significant at $p < .05$, ** Statistically significant at $p < .01$, *** Statistically significant at $p < .001$

Students reported finding it more interesting to spend time talking with people from other countries on the post-test ($M=3.93$, $SD=.258$) than on the pre-test ($M=3.90$, $SD=.310$), $t(28)=-.441$, $p=.663$. The post-test ($M=3.07$, $SD=.753$) revealed students were more likely to think of themselves as global citizens than reported on the pre-test ($M=.321$, $SD=.491$), $t(28)=1.000$, $p=.326$. Students also expressed more of a desire on the post-test ($M=3.81$, $SD=.396$) to understand people's behaviors in the context of their own culture than on the pre-test ($M=3.67$, $SD=4.80$), $t(26)=-1.442$, $p=.161$. Students reported a stronger connection with humanity worldwide on the post-test ($M=3.18$, $SD=.772$) than on the pre-test ($M=3.14$, $SD=.591$), $t(27)=-.225$, $p=.823$. Students also reported being more likely on the post-test ($M=3.38$, $SD=.622$) to identify as a member of the worldwide community than on the pre-test ($M=3.28$, $SD=.528$). Finally, there was no difference between post-test ($M=3.86$, $SD=.351$) and

pre-test ($M=3.86$, $SD=.351$), $t(28)=.000$, $p=1.000$ regarding whether people in the United States can learn from people in other parts of the world.

Cultural Engagement in Their Own Words

The qualitative data for this study revealed that students had many opportunities to engage with Danish culture. Through spending time with their partners and their host families, students encountered Danish life from the perspective of Danish citizens. During the individual interviews, group interviews, and journals, four subthemes that emerged: (a) social engagement, (b) family engagement, (c) local engagement, and (d) hygge.

Social Engagement. When participating in a Short-Term Study Abroad exchange program, students have the opportunity to become friends with a person from the host culture. In the constructivist tradition, this experience allows students to learn about cultural elements in a way that allows them to develop their own understanding. Living with a partner allows for in depth social engagement, which one student referred to as a “totally different experience, and I love it” (Group 2 Interview). On this exchange, students have opportunities to learn through direct contact, rather than from a teacher’s lecture. Participants reported numerous opportunities for social engagement throughout the exchange.

In removing the vacation filter, students had the opportunity to spend time with their partner and larger groups of students. The participants on this exchange planned a barbecue, pizza party, and numerous nights at various families’ houses (Bari Interview). The American students reported that they had the ability to see the normal life of a Danish teen (Denny journal; Jen Interview; Lisa Journal; Kerry Interview; Kristen Interview; Michelle Journal). In terms of having the opportunity to meet and get to know people on this exchange rather than on a family vacation, Kristen noted that it was “a lot easier” while in Denmark. Kerry stated, “When we were

in Denmark, I was living the real culture.” Jen credited living with her host family as pushing her into “basically being a Dane for the full 10 days.”

In their final journal entries, numerous students spoke highly of the opportunities for social engagement while in Denmark and recognized the significance of such occasions. Students reported “soaking in the lifestyle...and the values” (Michelle Journal) and enjoying “the aspect of living, not just seeing another culture” (Denny Journal). Displaying the impact of direct interaction, one student wrote, “My favorite moments consisted of talking and laughing with the Danes and other Americans. It is the little moments that made this exchange so special” (Lisa Journal). Echoing the same sentiment of the previously mentioned journal entry by another student, Bari described exceeding her pre-trip expectations, “I was expecting to go to Denmark, see Denmark, go to a few school classes and make a few friends with the Danes, but at the end of it I realize there’s a lot more to it... it was just things I wasn’t expecting and people I became friends with and just closer bonds than I was expecting to make” (Bari Interview).

Family Engagement. In the journals, seven entries commented on the significance of the opportunity to stay with a host family. Students referred to the routines in which they took part which differed from their family routines at home and how these activities taught them about the culture (Bridget Journal; Denny Journal; Kelly Journal). One student stated that living in someone else’s house was “the best part of the exchange” (Luke Journal) and another “loved being a part of [my host] family” (Kelly Journal).

In the group sessions and the individual interviews, students elaborated on how living with their host-families helped them to better understand Danish culture. At night, many of the families took the time to talk to the American students and make them feel a part of their home (Bari Interview; Group 3 Interview; Jen Interview; Kerry Interview; Jen Interview; Luke

Interview). These conversations helped to educate the American students about Danish current events such as current immigration issues, and also about how Danes exhibit their national pride in different ways than Americans (Group 3 Interview). With such friendly and accommodating hosts, students also took the time to “ask [my host family] questions and get to know them and... the way they view things to give me a different perspective” (Jen Interview). Kristen described how living at someone else’s house made engaging with Danish culture outside of their host families’ homes significantly easier, “It felt very, like, normal. I was like, at ease. Because it was like you had a home there, even though it wasn’t home-home, but you had your family, and you had your home. So, it just felt like you were going out. You always had a nice place to come back to” (Kristen Interview).

Hygge. In Danish culture there exists a state of mind that helps Denmark earn its title of happiest culture. While we do not have a direct translation in English, Danes describe hygge (pronounced hoo-gah) as a way to enjoy life’s essentials. Made famous through the use of candles to light the long nights during winter in Denmark, hygge encourages people to slow down and appreciate their surroundings. While books and articles exist to explain hygge, outsiders may still find it somewhat confusing. At the end of the 10-day exchange, most of the students had come to appreciate hygge culture and cited it as a major factor contributing to their enjoyment of the exchange. Six different journal entries referenced hygge as a significant part of their time in Denmark. After discussing the benefit of hard work, one student’s journal entry stated that “it is also equally beneficial to relax, rejuvenate, and embrace Danish hygge” (Brendan Journal).

In each of the interviews, students discussed in depth their experience with hygge. Christina described hygge as “a peaceful thing. It gives you a sense of okay, relax... No one was

rushing, everyone was taking their time” (Christina Interview). Jen came to understand hygge while at a Danish student’s house for an evening, “Getting to talk to each other about her own experiences... so that idea of hygge, that’s literally the main takeaway” (Jen Interview). While discussing her experience at a restaurant, Kerry described how servers do not check in on their tables as they do in the United States because social customs label that behavior as rude.

According to her, this practice enhances hygge when at a restaurant, “They aren’t supposed to come up all the time, like they want this hygge lifestyle where you get your food and you sit there and just talk. Like you enjoy your people” (Kerry Interview). When asked what customs she enjoyed the most, Kristen described how “when we did hygge, and like going out and shopping with our friends... and yea, like just sitting and watching tv, and eating dinner with my family, that was really fun” (Kristen Interview). While Luke did not use the term hygge to refer to any of his experiences, he did echo the sentiments of the other interviewees when he discussed the emphasis on family time among his hosts and also the relaxed nature of Danish culture. Students learned about hygge through their experiences spending time with their partners and host families, not by sightseeing at various tourist attractions.

Cultural Engagement Summary

Taking part in the Danish Exchange Program allows students to experience cultural elements different from what they normally experience. By having partners and host families who have a deep connection to Danish culture, students can put information in context by asking questions and having discussions. Through the individual interviews, group interviews, and journals, students reported increased cultural engagement through social and family engagement, as well as by developing an understanding of hygge.

Tolerance for Ambiguity

According to Mezirow (1993; 1997) learning takes place when people encounter unfamiliar or uncomfortable situations and through critical reflection transform the distress of these ambiguous circumstances into feelings of normalcy. According to Shadowen and colleagues (2015), students who study abroad encounter conditions and settings that challenge their comfort levels, and their tolerance for ambiguity measures their competence in overcoming “novel stimuli” (p. 232). On the Ambiguity Tolerance subscale, the GEMS did not reveal any statistically significant differences between the pre-test and post-test, but through the interviews, journals, and group sessions students reported processing ambiguous experiences.

GEMS Subscale: Tolerance for Ambiguity

The Tolerance for Ambiguity subscale consisted of items 13 to 19. On this subscale, students reported a higher tolerance for ambiguity on the post-test ($M=21.1786$, $SD=3.35607$) than on the pre-test ($M=20.6071$, $SD=3.76474$), $t(27)=-.829$, $p=.414$. No statistical difference occurred between the pre-test and the post-test. The items on this subscale create two categories: (a) active problem solving and (b) confidence in confronting ambiguity.

GEMS Tolerance for Ambiguity: Active Problem Solving. The active problem-solving questions investigate student feelings about their ability to actively overcome obstacles when confronting ambiguity. The active problem solving items are 15, 18, and 19. No statistically significant differences emerged among these items (See Table 4.5).

Table 4.5***Tolerance for Ambiguity: Active Problem-Solving Paired Samples t-Test***

| | t | df | Sig. |
|--|--------|----|------|
| I enjoy solving problems that must be viewed from multiple perspectives. | -1.000 | 28 | .326 |
| I feel competent navigating ambiguous situations. | -.465 | 27 | .646 |
| I enjoy exploring new places where I am unfamiliar with the geography or the people. | -.226 | 28 | .823 |

Note: *Statistically significant at $p < .05$, ** Statistically significant at $p < .01$, *** Statistically significant at $p < .001$

Students reported on the post-test ($M=3.17$, $SD=.759$) a greater enjoyment for solving problems that must be viewed from multiple perspectives than on the pre-test ($M=3.00$, $SD=.886$), $t(28)=-1.000$, $p=.326$. Similarly, students reported on the post-test ($M=3.62$, $SD=.622$) a greater enjoyment of exploring new places when unfamiliar with the geography or people than on the pre-test ($M=3.59$, $SD=.733$), $t(28)=-.226$, $p=.823$. Lastly, students reported on the post-test ($M=2.71$, $SD=.810$) feeling less competent navigating ambiguous situations than on the pre-test ($M=2.79$, $SD=.686$), $t(27)=-.465$, $p=.646$.

GEMS Tolerance for Ambiguity: Confidence in Confronting Ambiguity. Items 13, 14, 16, and 17 asked students about their abilities to navigate through ambiguous situations. None of the items revealed statistically significant differences between the pre-test and the post-test (See Table 4.6).

Table 4.6***Tolerance for Ambiguity: Confidence in Overcoming Ambiguity Paired Samples t-Test***

| | t | df | Sig. |
|--|--------|----|------|
| I am comfortable with ambiguous situations. | -.926 | 28 | .362 |
| I prefer situations where there is some uncertainty about potential outcomes or solutions. | -1.758 | 28 | .090 |
| I feel that I can handle ambiguous situations. | -.528 | 28 | .602 |
| I prefer to have new experiences rather than familiar or routine experiences. | .205 | 28 | .839 |

Note: *Statistically significant at $p < .05$, ** Statistically significant at $p < .01$, *** Statistically significant at $p < .001$

On the post-test (M=2.97, SD=.731) students reported a greater comfort with ambiguous situations than on the pre-test (M=2.79, SD=.819), $t(28) = -.926$, $p = .362$. Students also reported a greater preference for situations where there is uncertainty about potential outcomes or solutions on the post-test (M=2.48, SD=2.24) than on the pre-test (M=2.24, SD=.830), $t(28) = -1.758$, $p = .90$. Similarly, students reported on the post-test (M=3.07, SD=.704) a greater feeling that they can handle ambiguous situations than on the pre-test (M=3.00, SD=.756), $t(28) = -.528$, $p = .602$. Students reported more of a preference on the pre-test (M=3.21, SD=.774) for new experiences over familiar or routine experiences than on the post-test (M=3.17, SD=.759), $t(28) = .205$, $p = .839$.

Ambiguity Tolerance in Their Own Words

Having a high tolerance for ambiguity can help a student while on an exchange such as this program as it allows the student to remain composed in a new situation while learning and growing. High levels of this tolerance also allow students freedom and flexibility so that they can make decisions to do activities when they become available. For example, differences in attitudes towards scheduling provided a source of disorientation for many students while in

Denmark, but one student in particular expressed that he enjoyed his partner's desire to approach their time together with little structure. In his group session, this student expressed how they spent their free time with an overall destination such as going into Copenhagen, but they did not decide on specific plans in order to allow them as much flexibility as possible. Noting that he "thought it was really cool how lightly the effort is taken here" (Group 2 Interview). A student in another group felt that this light effort for plans allowed her to learn a lot about Denmark in an "authentic" manner as opposed to her highly structured and self-described less enjoyable family trip to Italy (Group 3 Interview). These two students had an ability to ignore desires to see certain sites or participate in specific activities in order to allow their experience to unfold naturally.

Participating in an STSA program can offer opportunities for students to increase their ambiguity tolerance (Shadowen et al., 2015). In her interview, Bari discussed obstacles she faced while in Denmark including her partner leaving her in Copenhagen, not always having an awareness of her plans, and overcoming discomfort regarding not having the freedom that her car affords to her. Upon reflection though, Bari did express that despite her initial lack of awareness regarding the extent of differences she would encounter, the exchange changed her in that it opened "her mind a little bit more" (Bari Interview). Another student felt a similar type of awakening when confronted with cultural surprises and became "more about the experience, and more comfortable about traveling and other cultures" (Denny Journal). Kerry described her initial struggles with restaurant service in Denmark because of the minimal attention compared to her training as a server in the United States. She stated that in the future she would not find herself questioning a server's manners in another country as she initially did while in Denmark

(Kerry Interview). While high ambiguity tolerance will help a student initially, students can develop this acceptance while abroad.

Ambiguity Tolerance Summary

While the GEMS did not reveal statistically significant differences between the pre-test and the post-test, students did report in their interviews, journals, and group sessions their attitudes and feelings of encountering ambiguous experiences while in Denmark. By encountering these novel situations, students had opportunities to process feelings that emerged within them.

Knowledge of the Host Site

Knowledge of the host site refers to students' acquired knowledge of their place of study, or in this exchange, Denmark. According to Shadowen et al. (2015), this concept includes "the host culture's norms, governance, structure, history, and current issues...demonstrating that students took the time and effort to acquire in-depth knowledge of their program's context" (pg. 233). In addition to the knowledge of teenage independence, hygge, and other cultural elements already mentioned, the students seemed to learn about Denmark and its culture. As only one student in the program had traveled to Denmark prior to this experience, I expected to see growth in their knowledge of Denmark as reported on the GEMS and through the individual interviews, group interviews, and journals.

GEMS Subscale: Knowledge of Denmark

The Knowledge of Host Site subscale consisted of items 20 to 24. On this subscale, students answered questions to report what they know about Denmark's history, politics, culture, and current events. On the subscale as a whole, students reported on the post-test ($M=15.8621$,

SD=3.35607) having statistically significantly more knowledge about Denmark than on the pre-test (M=9.4828, SD=4.24786), $t(28)=-8.091$, $p<.001$.

Similar to the overall subscale, each of the individual items on this subscale had statistically significant differences between the pre-test and post-test (See Table 4.7).

Table 4.7

Knowledge of Host Site Paired Samples t-Test

| | t | df | Sig. |
|--|--------|----|---------|
| I have sufficient knowledge of my host site to explain a current issue there to a friend or family member who has never been there. | -4.113 | 28 | .000*** |
| I can discuss with confidence at least two historic events that are important to the population of my host site. | -5.914 | 28 | .000*** |
| I can discuss with confidence the system of government and politics in my host site. | -6.716 | 28 | .000*** |
| I have sufficient knowledge of my host site to have a discussion about a current social or economic issue of importance to the area. | -7.159 | 28 | .000*** |
| I can explain with confidence what the community is like at my host site. | -9.486 | 28 | .000*** |

Note: *Statistically significant at $p<.05$, ** Statistically significant at $p<.01$, *** Statistically significant at $p<.001$

Students expressed statistically significantly more confidence on the post-test (M=3.10, SD=.724) that they had the knowledge of Denmark to explain current issues to friends or family than on the pre-test (M=2.10, SD=1.113), $t(28)=4.113$, $p<.001$. With regards to historic events, students reported statistically significantly more confidence on the post-test (M=3.10, SD=.860) that they could discuss at least two important events than on the pre-test (M=1.83, SD=.966), $t(28)=-5.914$, $p<.001$. Confidence in having the ability to discuss Danish government in politics increased by a statistically significant amount from the pre-test (M=1.97, SD=.981) to the post-test (M=2.97, SD=.823), $t(28)=-6.716$, $p<.001$. The post-test (M=3.00, SD=.756) increased by a

statistically significant amount over the pre-test ($M=1.72$, $SD=.882$) in terms of students reporting having sufficient knowledge of Denmark to have a discussion about current social or economic issues, $t(28)=-7.159$, $p<.001$. Lastly, students reported on the post-test ($M=3.69$, $SD=.541$) statistically significantly more confidence in explaining what Denmark is like to others than on the pre-test ($M=1.86$, $SD=.953$), $t(28)=-9.486$, $p<.001$.

Knowledge of Denmark in Their Own Words

Many of the students reflected on their experiences with Danish transportation. Some students spoke of the efficiency of the trains (Bari Interview; Blanca Journal; Christina Interview; Kelly Journal; Liz Journal). Reliance on public transportation, according to Jen, contributes to differences in how Danes live their lives as opposed to Americans. Similar to the reliance on public transportation, the prevalence of bicycles and roads built specifically for biking commuters piqued the interest of a few students (Amanda Journal; Bari Journal; Liz Journal). Regarding the prevalence of bikes, Liz noted that there “are racks of [bikes] in the cities” (Liz Journal) and Amanda commented that the Danes “ride bikes everywhere (not just in the big cities!)” (Amanda Journal). Some students even used bikes as their primary mode of transportation as Bari wrote about riding “our bikes early in the morning to get to school rather than take the easy way of driving a car” (Bari Journal). Students even discussed young Danes who rode bikes as a student told a story about “a little child...probably in 2nd grade riding a bike to school by himself which is unheard of [In the United States]” (Group 2 Interview). None of the American students commute by bike normally, so this aspect of Danish culture seemed novel to them.

The journal transcripts and group sessions revealed acquired knowledge related to Danish design. Students in Group 3 discussed the location of light switches outside of the bathroom as a

major difference from the United States (Group 3 Interview). Susie wrote in the journal that the “houses are smaller, but make everything so beautiful and simple” (Susie Journal). Blanca echoed the Susie’s statement by writing about the “white walls, ceilings, floors and cabinets” and “windows that brighten the rooms” (Blanca Journal). Moving out of the home setting, Christina and Bari both discussed in their interviews how they found Danish architecture in Copenhagen very appealing as Bari spoke of the “pretty cool design elements” and Christina fascinated by how “small and old” and full of “history” she found Copenhagen.

Danish political culture emerged as a sub-theme as well. Through discussions with her host family, Kristen spoke about how she learned of the distaste that many Danes had for the United States’ war in Iraq (Kristen Interview). Focusing on Danish affairs, Luke spoke about the monarchy noting that while the Danes “have a queen, she is just a symbol” (Luke Journal). Related to the monarchy Bari noted that she learned from her partner that the Danes only use flags for official business and “if something special isn’t happening, then they fly the thinner ones. Then if something special is happening, they fly the bigger ones. Like the Royal birthdays, then the bigger flag goes up” (Bari Interview). While these students spoke of governmental affairs, other students discussed political rivalry with Sweden of which their partners taught them. Kerry and other students in her group session discussed an incident with a Swedish woman who yelled at them while in line for food in Copenhagen (Group 2 Interview; Kerry Transcript). After a day trip to Sweden, Michelle’s partner asked if she preferred Denmark or Sweden and while “she wasn’t trying to put her bias out there [in favor of Denmark over Sweden]...it was definitely there” (Group 2 Interview). While we prepare the students as best as we can prior to travelling, we do not get a chance to tell them all of this information.

Along with political culture, the American students also learned about Danish popular culture as well. When asked about what cultural elements they picked up, a student in Group 3 spoke about the Danes' pride for the Danish band, Lukas Graham (Group 3 Interview). Jen described in her interview how her partner introduced her to Lukas Graham and how she learned that the Danes are "super proud" of them (Jen Interview).

Multiple students elaborated on the pride that Danes feel towards their localities. The students in group three spoke about their observations regarding this pride, noting that they "really identify with their town, which I think is interesting" (Group 3 Interview). In the same conversation another student described how her partner informed her that "everyone she knows wants to...live where they live...when they grow up, and...keep living there, where people...in [our town] can't wait to leave" (Group 2 Interview).

Knowledge of the Host Site Summary

Students had many opportunities to learn about Danish culture, history, current events, design and architecture, and politics. According to GEMS results, students gained statistically significant more knowledge about Denmark during their 10-day trip. Through journals, group sessions, and interviews students reported learning about Danish transportation, Danish political issues, pop culture, and Danish teen preferences for their future.

Diversity Openness

Because students in the United States will continually see a more diverse society (Pascarella et al., 1996), much of the literature regarding STSAs has sought to identify programs that can increase openness to diversity (Shadowen, Chieffo, & Guera, 2015). Contact with foreign cultures increases student ability to engage with diverse groups of people (Pascarella et al., 1996). Through the immersion design of the Denmark exchange, students had plenty of

foreign contact, and therefore had significant opportunities to develop their openness to diversity. While schools can teach about diversity, Bari noted that this type of immersion program is different than the classroom because “involvement is probably the biggest piece” (Bari Interview). For Luke, the exchange provided him an important lesson that people need to be “more accepting of other people...you kinda have to lend to the opposite view.” Students revealed through journals, interviews, and group sessions that they processed issues related to diversity while in Denmark. The Diversity Openness subscale on the GEMS did have some statistically significant differences between the pre- and post-test.

GEMS Subscale: Diversity Openness

The Diversity Openness subscale consisted of items 25 to 37. For items 25 to 31, students reported on their feelings regarding a person with whom they just became friends. With items 32 to 37, students considered the same questions as they would pertain to someone whom a sibling debated marrying. For the whole subscale, students reported on the post-test ($M=49.9655$, $SD=2.61155$) statistically significantly more openness to diversity than on the pre-test ($M=48.7931$, $SD=4.43508$), $t(28)=-2.2112$, $p<.05$. Similarly, students reported on the post-test ($M=27.0690$, $SD=1.27982$) statistically significantly higher levels of openness to diversity with regards to new friends than on the pre-test ($M=26.0345$, $SD=2.89683$) $t(28)=-2.079$, $p<.05$. In terms of potential partners or spouses for siblings, while students did report higher levels of openness to diversity on the post-test ($M=22.8966$, $SD=1.75956$) than on the pre-test ($M=22.7586$, $SD=1.80585$), $t(28)=-.660$, $p=.515$, no statistically significant difference emerged. Items related to friends (25-31) and siblings (32-37) both asked the same questions with the following themes: (a) political/economic attitudes, (b) social attitudes, and (c) cultural/ethnic attitudes.

Political/Economic Attitudes. Because political and economic situations vary across the world, intercultural competence includes attitudes to political and economic differences. Items 25, 26, 32, and 33 ask participants to consider the political and economic opinions and background of potential friends or siblings' future spouses (See Table 4.8).

Table 4.8

Diversity Openness: Political/Economic Attitudes Paired Samples t-Test

| | | t | df | Sig. |
|--|------------------|--------|----|-------|
| If the person holds different political beliefs and opinions than you. | Potential Friend | -2.045 | 28 | .050* |
| | Sibling's Spouse | -1.000 | 28 | .326 |
| If the person is from a different socioeconomic background than you. | Potential Friend | -1.000 | 28 | .326 |
| | Sibling's Spouse | .441 | 28 | .663 |

*Statistically significant at $p < .05$, ** Statistically significant at $p < .01$, *** Statistically

significant at $p < .001$

Items 25 and 32 asked about a person with different political beliefs and opinions. With regards to a new friend, students reported on the post-test ($M=3.52$, $SD=.738$) being statistically more likely to believe that they could become good friends than on the pre-test ($M=3.28$, $SD=7.97$), $t(28)=-2.045$, $p<.05$. In terms of a potential mate for a sibling, students reported being more likely to accept the relationship on the post-test ($M=3.55$, $SD=.686$) than on the pre-test ($M=3.45$, $SD=.736$), $t(28)=-1.00$, $p=.326$.

Items 26 and 33 asked about a person from a different socioeconomic background than the student. Neither item had a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test. When considering a new friend, students reported on the post-test ($M=3.90$, $SD=.310$) being more likely to believe that they could become good friends than on the pre-test ($M=3.83$, $SD=.384$), $t(28)=-1.000$, $p=.326$. If tasked with supporting a potential mate for a sibling, students

reported being less likely to accept the relationship on the post-test ($M=3.83$, $SD=.384$) than on the pre-test ($M=3.86$, $SD=.351$), $t(28)=-.441$, $p=.663$.

Social Attitudes. As with politics and economics, cultural differences include differences in attitudes regarding personal culture. Items 27, 28, and 34 ask about social attitudes regarding religion and sexual orientation (See Table 4.9).

Table 4.9

Diversity Openness: Social Attitudes Paired Samples t-Test

| | | t | df | Sig. |
|--|------------------|--------|----|-------|
| If the person has different religious beliefs than you. | Potential Friend | -1.361 | 28 | .184 |
| | Sibling's Spouse | .372 | 28 | .712 |
| If the person has a different sexual orientation than you. | Potential Friend | -2.415 | 28 | .023* |

Note: *Statistically significant at $p<.05$, ** Statistically significant at $p<.01$, *** Statistically significant at $p<.001$

Items 27 and 34 asked about a person with different religious beliefs than the student. With regards to a new friend, students reported on the post-test ($M=3.83$, $SD=.468$) being more likely to believe that they could become good friends than on the pre-test ($M=3.72$, $SD=.528$), $t(28)=-1.361$, $p=.184$. In terms of a potential mate for a sibling, students reported being less likely to accept the relationship on the post-test ($M=3.69$, $SD=.660$) than on the pre-test ($M=3.72$, $SD=.591$), $t(28)=.372$, $p=.712$.

Item 28 asked students to consider a person with a different sexual orientation. Students reported on the post-test ($M=3.93$, $SD=.258$) being statistically significantly more likely to become good friends with such a person than on the pre-test ($M=3.76$, $SD=.511$), $t(28)=-2.415$, $p<.05$. The GEMS does not have a corresponding item for sibling marriages and sexual orientation differences.

Cultural/Ethnic Attitudes. A major component of intercultural competence is tolerance towards cultural and ethnic differences. Items 29, 30, 31, 35, 36, and 37 ask participants to consider friends and sibling's spouses from various cultural backgrounds (See Table 4.10).

Table 4.10

Diversity Openness: Cultural/Ethnic Attitudes Paired Samples t-Test

| | | t | df | Sig. |
|---|------------------|--------|----|------|
| If the person is from a different cultural background than you. | Potential Friend | -1.797 | 28 | .083 |
| | Sibling's Spouse | 1.000 | 28 | .326 |
| If the person is from a different racial or ethnic background than you. | Potential Friend | -1.651 | 28 | .110 |
| | Sibling's Spouse | -.812 | 28 | .424 |
| If the person is from a different country than you. | Potential Friend | -.254 | 28 | .801 |
| | Sibling's Spouse | -1.440 | 28 | .161 |

Note: *Statistically significant at $p < .05$, ** Statistically significant at $p < .01$, *** Statistically

significant at $p < .001$

Items 29 and 35 asked about a person from a different cultural background than the student. Neither item had a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test. When considering a new friend, students reported on the post-test ($M=4.00$, $SD=.000$) being more likely to believe that they could become good friends than on the pre-test ($M=3.79$, $SD=.620$), $t(28)=-1.797$, $p=.083$. When considering supporting a potential mate for a sibling, students reported being less likely to accept the relationship on the post-test ($M=3.93$, $SD=.258$) than on the pre-test ($M=3.97$, $SD=.186$), $t(28)=1.000$, $p=.326$.

For items 30 and 36, students considered a person with a different racial or ethnic background. Neither item had a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test. In terms of a new friend, students reported on the post-test ($M=4.00$, $SD=.000$) being more likely to become good friends with the person than on the pre-test ($M=3.79$, $SD=.675$), $t(28)=-1.651$, $p=.110$. As for a sibling's potential spouse, students also reported on the post-test

($M=3.93$, $SD=.258$) feeling more likely to support the relationship than on the pre-test ($M=3.86$, $.441$), $t(28)=-.812$, $p=.424$.

Students reported on their attitudes regarding a person from a different country for items 31 and 37. Neither had a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test. Students reported on the post-test ($M=3.90$, $SD=.409$) being more likely to become good friends with the person than on the pre-test ($M=3.86$, $SD=.581$), $t(28)=-.254$, $p=.801$. Similarly, students reported on the post-test ($M=3.97$, $SD=1.86$) being more likely to support a sibling's potential marriage partner than on the pre-test ($M=3.90$, $SD=.310$), $t(28)=-1.440$, $p=.161$.

Diversity Openness in their Own Words

Luke recognized the benefit the exchange had on his ability to appreciate lifestyles different from his own. In his interview he discussed the growth such an experience could have for him “When you travel or when you talk to people that are from another, whether it be part of [our state], or part of the world, you can just learn so much. And I do think it makes you so much more accepting when you get to know people on that level and...understand different ways of life...we're not all the same” (Luke Interview). Similar to Luke, Kerry believed that this exchanged made her more appreciative of differences and able to learn something about herself in the process, stating that going to a new place where “you might not belong is something that you should do in life” (Kerry Interview). These two students expressed that they understood the overall benefits of engaging with a foreign culture.

Like ambiguity tolerance, diversity openness can develop over the course of an STSA program (Shadowen et al., 2015). Through this particular exchange program, students tended to state that their time in Denmark made them think that different ways of living may not produce different outcomes for success or satisfaction. Reflecting on this sentiment, Kristen said that the

Danish system “works...I can see it work[s] for them” (Kristen Interview). Students came to these realizations because the immersion design allowed students to see the “real culture” (Kerry Interview). While the above students discussed the system from a societal level, Luke revealed how one can become open to diversity on a more microscopic level. Unlike his personal experiences, Luke discussed his partner’s family dynamic as one which had a working mother and stay at home father. Not characteristic of Denmark, this difference did contradict Luke’s understanding of parental roles, but the overall dynamic of the family was “what my family does” in terms of interactions (Luke Interview). In the differences of the Danish lifestyle, students were able to see similarities and experience personal growth.

Discussions at home played a major role in the development of diversity openness. Student interviews revealed the extent to which cultural awareness occurred while at home in the evenings or while spending time with their partners. For Bari, conversations with her host family about Danish culture and also their family traditions helped to open her “to the culture a lot more rather than just traveling...with my family and just staying with ourselves...away from the local people” (Bari Interview). Similar to Bari, nightly conversations as part of her host family’s hospitality left Kristen feeling “comfortable” and “normal” in Denmark. Just like Bari and Kristen, Kerry’s conversations with her host family and Danish students provided enlightenment into Danish culture as she stated that she “created an understanding for different people, not just...their cultures” (Kerry Interview). In addition to this enlightenment, Kerry also became more comfortable in her ability to interact with a different culture, noting that she became “more comfortable being able to talk about things without feeling like I was doing wrong or getting judged” (Kerry Interview). More specific to his host-family, Luke’s previously mentioned interaction with a stay-at-home father became an informative and beneficial experience because

of the discussions that occurred with his partner's family. Recognizing the importance of such discussions Jen said that she and her partner eagerly engaged with each other because "I think we both wanted...to understand each other better. And I think that's all it takes is the mindset of both sides" (Jen Interview).

Diversity Openness Summary

While in Denmark, students had opportunities to examine their own openness to diversity. GEMS results revealed statistically significant differences between the pre-test and the post-test for this subscale. While the sub-subscale related to diversity of friends had a statistically significant difference on the pre- and post-test, the sub-subscale related to potential spouses of siblings did not. Despite these mixed results on the GEMS, students revealed in their reflections that they attended to their thoughts regarding diversity openness including culture, lifestyle, and the importance of traveling to an unfamiliar culture.

Resilience and Personal Growth

In a new situation, and while experiencing the discomforts of disorientation, students had opportunities to grow as individuals. Reflecting the Transformative Learning Theory, students who engaged in critical reflection during these opportunities could develop new ways of thinking and understanding. These new ways of thinking and understanding could manifest as resilience, or the ability to overcome obstacles. The GEMS results had a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test, and the journals, interviews, and group sessions revealed more detailed information as to the experiences that relate to resilience and personal growth.

GEMS Results: Resilience

On the GEMS, the Resilience scale consisted of items 38 to 43. On this subscale, students reported a difference in resilience from the pre-test ($M=16.9310$, $SD=2.34416$) to the post-test

($M=17.0345$, $SD=2.21170$), $t(28)=-.264$, $p=.794$. This subscale has two sub-subscales. Higher ratings on items 38, 40, and 42 display student abilities to overcome obstacles while higher ratings on items 39, 41, and 43 reflect student deficiencies in overcoming obstacles.

Ability to Overcome Obstacles. For this sub-subscale students reflect on how easily they can overcome unexpected obstacles that they encounter. Higher scores reflect greater ease at moving past such difficulties (See Table 4.11).

Table 4.11

Resilience: Ability to Overcome Obstacles Paired Samples t-Test

| | t | df | Sig. |
|---|-------|----|-------|
| I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times. | .000 | 28 | 1.000 |
| It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event. | -.328 | 28 | .745 |
| I usually come through difficult times with little trouble. | -.273 | 28 | .787 |

*Statistically significant at $p<.05$, ** Statistically significant at $p<.01$, *** Statistically significant at $p<.001$

Students reported no difference in tending to bounce back quickly after hard times from the pre-test ($M=3.03$, $SD=.566$) to the post-test ($M=3.03$, $SD=.566$), $t(28)=.000$, $p=1.000$. In terms of not needing long to recover from a stressful event, students also reported no difference from the pre-test ($M=2.76$, $SD=.435$) to the post-test ($M=2.76$, $SD=.435$), $t(28)=.000$, $p=1.000$. Students did report on the post-test ($M=2.66$, $SD=.553$) a greater ability to come through difficult times with little trouble than on the pre-test ($M=2.62$, $SD=.494$), $t(28)=-.273$, $p=.787$.

Difficulty Overcoming Obstacles. Unlike the ability to overcome scale, higher numbers for this sub-subscale reflected less of an ability to overcome obstacles. On the GEMS results, I reversed these scores as the higher scores indicate less intercultural competence. None of these items had significant differences between the pre-test and the post-test (See Table 4.12).

Table 4.12***Resilience: Difficulty Overcoming Obstacles Paired Samples t-Test***

| | t | df | Sig. |
|--|-------|----|-------|
| I have a hard time making it through stressful events. | -.571 | 28 | .573 |
| It is hard for me to snap back when something bad happens. | .372 | 28 | .712 |
| I tend to take a long time to get over set-backs in my life. | .000 | 28 | 1.000 |

Note: *Statistically significant at $p < .05$, ** Statistically significant at $p < .01$, *** Statistically significant at $p < .001$

Students reported on the post-test ($M=2.66$, $SD=.769$) an easier time making it through stressful events than on the pre-test ($M=2.59$, $SD=.780$), $t(28)=-.571$, $p=.573$. When something bad happens to students, students reported on the post-test ($M=2.90$, $SD=.489$) that they found it more difficult to snap back when something bad happens than on the pre-test ($M=2.90$, $SD=5.57$), $t(28)=.372$, $p=.712$. No difference occurred between the pre-test ($M=3.03$, $SD=.626$) and the post-test ($M=3.03$, $SD=.626$) regarding whether or not students tend to take a long time to get over setbacks, $t(28)=.000$, $p=1.000$.

Resilience and Personal Growth in Their Own Words

With only one student having traveled to Denmark prior to this exchange, students encountered many experiences that required resilience and in turn fostered opportunities for personal growth. Students reflected on this resilience and personal growth in terms of experiences in Denmark and the implications of these experiences for their future endeavors. Multiple subthemes emerged related to personal growth including (a) confidence in new situations and environments, (b) openness to cultural differences, and (c) development of independence.

Confidence in New Situations and Environments. None of the students participating in the exchange had taken part in an immersion program and only one had traveled to Denmark prior to the trip. As a result of the lack of immersion and time spent in Denmark, all of the students encountered situations and a setting that they found unfamiliar. By the end of the trip, many students reported growth in personal skills to overcome discomfort from new environments.

A new situation could involve people who one does not know very well. Two students described in their journals that learning to communicate with people different than them played a significant role in their experience. One stated that “it was difficult at times, but I will always remember these lessons” (Blanca Journal).

During the interviews, multiple students explained how this exchange experience could aid them in the future by helping them to understand how to approach ambiguous situations. Luke and Christina both expressed that this trip allowed them to act independently of their parents. When discussing new environments in the future such as college, Luke stated that he will “have a precursor...a precedent that I’ve lived through. And I’ll...realize... in the end, like, oh, you can do this...It’s really not as hard as your head tells you it is... You’re gonna [sic] adapt quicker than you’d expect, and you can do it without mom and dad” (Luke Interview). Similar to Luke, Christina expressed that she could successfully navigate situations without her parents. Christina described her transformation and emerging confidence in herself, stating that she could travel to Denmark and Sweden by herself and other countries with a friend rather than relying on her parents (Christina Interview). Following this statement I asked Christina if she could have imagined such a trip prior to taking part in the exchange, to which she replied “No.” When asked what prompted the change, she stated,

“[I] just felt so comfortable in the country... Knowing everyone, they were like, ‘Come back!’...I felt more grown up...I’m going to a new country...My parents trust me to go to a new country...Knowing that my parents trust me kind of put more trust in me. When shopping they kind of thought of me as more mature...I really like that and it just showed me how independent I can be... it really just kind of helped me move on from the fact that I don’t need my parents with me 24/7 [sic].” (Christina Interview)

In both of these interviews the students described the personal growth that they perceived in themselves that developed because of the exchange.

Just as with Luke and Christina, Kerry and Jen detailed the growth process they experienced, though not with regards to their parents. Reflecting on her time in Denmark, Jen noted that she “came back home feeling that it was more OK to be OK with change...This gives me the ability to know how to approach situations better and not be so hesitant...I’ll be like ‘I’ve already experienced that. This will be a different experience but I know how to kind of navigate’” (Jen Interview). Similar to Jen, Kerry described self-talk she could employ in order to mitigate her tendencies, “I think I will have to keep an open mind...Sometimes my open mind shuts down and I’m like, ‘OK, I’m going to do what I’m going to do, but I have to remember this is my Denmark here now’” (Kerry Interview). In these statements, Jen and Kerry represent a student’s ability to enhance their ability to approach future ambiguous situations by participating in an exchange program.

Openness to Cultural Differences. Just as students reported that their time in Denmark prepared them to handle unfamiliar situations, students reported better abilities to engage with cultures different than their own. Students reported a greater appreciation for the idea that different societies work in their own way and that one way is not necessarily better than another

(Bari Interview; Jen Interview; Kristen Interview; Luke Interview). According to Luke, “[the American way of life] isn’t the only way of doing things.” Kristen reflected Luke’s sentiment noting that “when I got back, it was like, oh, it works... I can see it worked for them.” Jen stated that the exchange made her feel “less judgmental.” Giving a specific example of how servers in other countries such as Denmark do not pay as close attention to their tables, Kerry stated that in a similar situation in the future, “I’d be like, ‘what the hell?’ But I think after I realized what I’ve just said... I’d be like, ‘Oh wait, we’re in a different country. This is probably why.’” Each of these statements reflects the students thoughts regarding passing judgement towards another culture.

Not all of the students expressed ease in coming to this conclusion. The comparative classes caused unease with Michelle who “felt a preconceived bias against my opinions and the USA by the teacher, and possibly the students.” Upon further reflection though this student came to a similar conclusion as Bari, Jen, Kristen and Luke, noting

“who is to say they didn’t feel the same way over here? We went into Denmark w/ [sic] set ideas thinking that they may change, but I honestly didn’t expect to challenge my thoughts so much as to be undecided still on who is ‘right.’ There is no one way to act either, and nothing is ‘weird,’ just ‘different.’...I caught myself multiple times going back and correcting something I said, or even correcting my thoughts and mindset.”

(Michelle Journal)

While this student expressed difficulty with not passing judgment over cultural differences, she did come to identify and reframe her thoughts that had a bias to her experiences.

Development of Independence. Many of the students reported that they believed Danish parents encouraged and allowed more independence for their children than American parents.

Following the exchange, a few of the students stated that they believed this experience began to awaken a sense of independence in themselves. When asked how she would describe the benefits of participating in the exchange program to potential students Bari said that the independence students experience on the trip helped them to grow intellectually. If given an opportunity to encourage another student to participate, she would say, “it’s cool you’re so young to go somewhere new without any one that you would know. You don’t have a mentor, you don’t have your parents. You’re just kind of on your own to do your own thing...They’ll come out thinking totally different about everything than what they went in with.” Expanding on her comfort of traveling on her own, Christina expressed that now she realizes that she “can do life on my own...I can go to college. I can get married. Have kids on my own...it’s going to be me.” Kristen also perceived that she developed a sense of independence, but she went further in her thoughts than Bari and Kristina in believing that her developing independence would help her to overcome obstacles in the future on her own without the help of her parents on which she has relied. Because Danish parents allow more freedom for their children, the American students had the opportunity to learn and grow as they could realize their capabilities to make their own decisions.

Resilience and Personal Growth Summary

New environments provide experiences for students that allow them to overcome difficulties in the process. For almost all of the students, Denmark was a new environment that offered unique challenges. Students reported growth in feelings of independence, greater openness to cultural differences, and increased confidence for new situations that they may encounter.

Chapter V: Discussion

Through this study I investigated the experience of secondary students participating in an STSA immersion exchange to Denmark. Over a 10-day overseas trip, I collected data through the Global Engagement Measurement Survey (GEMS), journal entries, individual interviews, and group interviews. These sources of data revealed that students experienced growth in their intercultural competence. While the GEMS did not reveal statistically significant changes in all areas of intercultural understanding, the qualitative sources displayed that students processed and reflected upon cultural differences in an attempt to achieve personal growth. With the findings in this study, I aim to inform secondary schools as they start or grow their overseas opportunities for students. The results of this study showed that a short stay in a foreign environment can provide a setting in which secondary students could develop their intercultural competence. In this chapter, I analyze and discuss the results of the study, identify limitations, provide suggestions for educational practice, and propose future research directions regarding this topic.

Summary of the Study

This study investigated a Short-Term Study Abroad program that partners two mid-Atlantic high schools with a school in Denmark. In order to take part in the exchange program, the American students completed an application process that consisted of an application form, 3 recommendations, 3 essays and a 10-minute interview. The Danish students took part in the exchange by enrolling in their school's English language track. All 29 American students enrolled in the exchange participated in the study. As part of the program, each American student received a Danish partner. Students lived at their partners' houses during each leg of the exchange. While the Danish students came to the United States for 10 days in the Fall and lived

with their American partners, the study collected data only during the spring leg of the trip which consisted of 3 pre-departure meetings and 10 days in Denmark.

For the study, I collected both qualitative and quantitative data in order to answer the research question: How are students' experiences on Short-Term Study Abroad Immersion programs intertwined with the development of their Intercultural Competence? In order to collect quantitative data, I administered a paper version of the Global Engagement Measurement Scale (GEMS) (Shadowen et al., 2015) as both a pre-test and a post-test. Using SPSS, I utilized a paired samples t-Test in order to analyze the GEMS results. Students completed the GEMS anonymously.

In terms of qualitative data, all participants completed four journal entries with pre-determined prompts. Students completed three entries after the fourth day in Denmark, and the final entry on the plane ride home. While in Denmark, all participants participated in one of three 45 to 60-minute small group interview-sessions. The students with the six median scores of the GEMS pre-test each participated in a one-hour individual semi-structured interview.

I drew from the Transformative Learning Theory (TLT) and the GEMS in order to identify the following codes: (a) disorientation (TLT), (b) critical reflection (TLT), (c) cultural engagement (GEMS), (d) tolerance for ambiguity (GEMS), (e) knowledge of the host-site (GEMS), (f) openness to diversity (GEMS), and (g) resilience (GEMS). Subthemes for the codes emerged based on the information that students provided for the qualitative data.

Application of Theoretical Framework to Findings

In Chapter II, I summarized three theoretical frameworks which provided a lens for me to view the experience of students on this STSA exchange program. The Transformative Learning Theory (TLT) informed most of my study under the premise that discomfort can lead to

reflection which leads to growth and learning. The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) supported TLT as critical reflection can lead a person from an ethnocentric frame of thought to an ethnorelative frame of thought. While both of these theories provide a very good lens to view intercultural development on STSAs, the Bioecological Theory (BET) explains the variations that occur among individual students. In this section, I describe how each of these three theories helps to explain the data collected in this study.

Transformative Learning Theory

According to the Transformative Learning Theory, learning occurs through an enlightening process. When people encounter and overcome obstacles, also known as disorientation dilemmas, they will engage in critical reflection and experience personal growth as they change their schemas (Mezirow, 1993). As the major theoretical framework for this study, TLT remains very relevant to the results of this study.

Traveling to Denmark for an immersion exchange program offered a different experience for the students taking part in this study. The journals and interviews revealed that students encountered various elements in Denmark that created a feeling of discomfort within them. In particular, the American students perceived the Danes as rude and uncaring because of relaxed scheduling tendencies among the Danish students. In order to enjoy the trip, the American students accepted this cultural difference as they reflected on their own lives. Many of the American students came to realize that they lived very busy and overscheduled lives as they compared themselves to their Danish partners. As a result, they looked at ways of incorporating some of the relaxed nature of the Danes' lives into their own.

TLT provided an effective lens for this study. During the interviews, I determined a need to help students identify sources of discomfort upon which the students could then reflect and

reconsider their schemas about cultural differences. In order to develop intercultural competence, students had to examine their feelings of cultural differences through a critical lens in order to experience growth in their understanding.

Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

Bennett's (1993; 2004; 2007) model states that intercultural sensitivity development occurs as a process where one moves from seeing their culture as an element that needs protection to viewing it as an element of the wider world that can adapt with new experiences. Only one student had travelled to Denmark prior to this exchange, so 28 students had no familiarity with Danish culture. Many of the students had not traveled outside of the United States prior to this exchange. While the students tended to lack experience in the Danish culture, they displayed growth from ethnocentric to ethnorelative modes of intercultural understanding.

The journals and group interviews completed during students' time in Denmark revealed that many of the transformations took place while in Denmark. During each of the group interviews, the students discussed their perceptions that the Danes had poor manners and that they believed their partners did not care very much about their presence as a result of what they believed to be the Danes' light scheduling initiatives (Group Interview 2; Group Interview 3). In trying to understand these differences between scheduling preferences and manners, the American students referred to how they would have done things or how they did do things while in the United States. Essentially the students viewed these differences from an ethnocentric perspective in which they denied the existence of a possible variation in culture.

During the group interviews I tried to utilize cognitive therapy skills in order to challenge student thought processes so that they could reframe their experiences in terms of their cultural differences. Through the group interviews, individual interviews, and final journal entries

students displayed ethnorelative thinking on topics that they had once seen through an ethnocentric lens. By the end of the exchange, students discussed hygge as an element of Danish culture that they wanted to adopt because it provided them with a sense of calm. Many of the participants came to recognize the chaos of their own lives in America. Students tended to speak highly of their Danish partners' daily family dinners and unscheduled time each night. Based on how students discussed hygge and their time at their partners' houses, a transformation likely occurred from frustration over the Danes' relaxed dispositions, to interest in the merits of slowing down. Bennett's model would view this transformation as a transition from an ethnocentric view of Danish culture to an ethnorelative view.

When in a foreign environment, people will only be able to view a foreign culture through the lenses that they have previously developed. People who are less experienced and less interculturally developed may not bring significant openness and understanding to their interactions with new cultures. Discomfort from misunderstandings could influence such a lack of openness and could result in defenses against new cultures. By the end of the 10 days in Denmark, students came to see Danish culture as an asset that they could explore and integrate into their own identity.

Bioecological Theory

Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) described development according to the Bioecological Theory in terms of interacting systems which influence personality and behaviors. These systems include a person's immediate environment and relationships (microsystems), societal institutions which directly influence a person (exosystems), and a person's wider culture (macrosystems) (Kulik, 2007). Each system acts in a reciprocal fashion and influences a person's development (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). A person's dispositions interact

with the various systems in multidirectional paths (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Sontag, 1996). These multidirectional influences which Bronfenbrenner described, help to explain the differences in experiences of the students on this exchange.

Students who partook in this exchange program had individual personalities, dispositions, and influences from their immediate surroundings in their lives. While each student had the same structure for this exchange (pre-departure meetings, host families, classes at the Danish school), individual backgrounds influenced how these students interacted with the various elements of the exchange. While some students complained about their partners' planning, others embraced the slower pace of life. Internal dispositions and experiences provide lenses through which some students view sources of stress in these cultural differences, while others perceive these differences as admirable. Similarly, student dispositions and personalities interacted with the exchange differently creating various outcomes. In the interviews one student saw her experience making her more independent (Christina Interview), another saw it as preparation for college (Kerry Interview), a third saw it as an opportunity for introspection and understanding of what he believed were simpler pleasures (Luke Interview).

Studying intercultural competence development in relation to STSAs cannot use a one-size-fits-all approach where coordinators expect the same outcome for every student. Every student will interact with the exchange differently depending on his or her previous life experiences. While the data suggested that all of the students encountered some type of disorientation, sources of that disorientation varied among the students. According to the Bioecological Theory, exchange outcomes depended on what dispositions students had prior to taking part in this exchange program.

Discussion of Results

While some researchers have suggested that abroad programs of a semester or longer maximize student benefits over shorter programs of eight weeks or less (Dwyer, 2004), other researchers have also indicated that STSAs can provide significant benefits (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004). This exchange program utilized many research-based best practices including having clear direction and goals, mentorship and guided including: (a) group discussions, (b) written reflection (c) pre-orientation sessions and (d) immersion and direct contact (Bell & Anscombe, 2013; Donnelly-Smith, 2014; Gaia, 2015; Gibbs, 2015; Goldstein, 2019; Hall et al. 2016; Jewet, 2010; Malewski & Phillion, 2009; Nguyen, 2014; Ritz, 2011; Smith et al., 2014; Vande Berg et al., 2015; Wallace Fuentes, 2015). The data collected showed that during this exchange, which utilized these strategies, students successfully interacted with Danish culture in a manner that helped them to develop their intercultural growth. In this section I will explain the results of the data and the implications regarding participant intercultural development.

Experiencing Disorientation

Throughout the exchange, the participants experienced disorientation in many ways. For the students in this exchange, Denmark is an unfamiliar environment and therefore should have elements and characteristics which require students to make some adjustments. Some of the ways in which disorientation manifested itself for the students, however, did occur unexpectedly. Personally, I did not expect scheduling differences to feature as prominently in the group interviews. Additionally, none of the participants in this exchange had taken a major trip without their parents and families prior to traveling to Denmark with this program, so students no longer had safety-nets to which many of them had become previously accustomed. In order to engage in the exchange itself, the students had to be more proactive in planning than on their family

vacations, despite doing so in an unfamiliar environment. Rather than wait for their parents to develop a travel plan, students reported creating their own itineraries with their partners.

Critical Self-Reflection

A major component of the Transformative Learning Theory is critical self-reflection. When confronted with a disorientation dilemma, a person needs to process the obstacle in order to come to understand it in order to develop new schemas for future situations (Alfred et al. 2013; Mezirow, 1997; Taylor, 2008). Upon completion of this exchange, students can utilize lessons that they learned while in Denmark to create new schemas for future interactions with people of various cultures. Qualitative data revealed that students engaged in critical self-reflection during and after the trip.

Because students all have individual dispositions and personalities, they will all have unique disorienting experiences and critical reflections. Interestingly while lifestyle differences between Danes and Americans caused considerable disorientation among the students, these differences also inspired a lot of self-critiquing. Although data suggesting that students made permanent changes to their lifestyle was beyond the scope of this study, the participants did raise a lot of internal questions as a result of the time they spent in Denmark. Many of the participants questioned the purpose of their hectic paces of life after experiencing the Danes' daily family dinners, unscheduled evening time, and few extracurricular obligations. For a lot of the students, they had to remove themselves from their daily American lives in order to recognize the stress that they report constantly feeling. According to the former Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs, Count Hayashi Tadasu (1909), "It is said that fish do not see water" (p. xvi), or in this case, the students do not recognize their habits when in their normal environment. By traveling

to Denmark, engaging directly with Danish culture, and not taking part in their normal routines, students could reflect on changes they perceived as beneficial to their own lives.

Cultural Engagement

Shadowen and colleagues (2015) used the following beliefs regarding cultural engagement in developing the GEMS: (a) cross-cultural awareness, openness, or sensitivity, (b) attitudes towards cultural differences, diversity, and exchanges, (c) global mindedness, and (d) understanding of interconnectedness between various people's and cultures. According to the GEMS results, the growth in cultural engagement that occurred between the pre-test and the post-test was not statistically significant. The qualitative data does provide evidence of a growth in cultural engagement. It is possible that the GEMS questions consider cultural engagement on a generic and transcendental level to which students have not yet connected their experiences.

While the students did express frustration with how the Danes scheduled time outside of school while in Denmark, students did eventually appreciate Danish *hygge*. The students came to understand *hygge* not as a prescribed set of behaviors but rather as a state of mind. By the end of the exchange, many of the students had opened their minds to the lifestyle of the Danes and became appreciative of the differences in the pace of life between Denmark and the United States. Without the opportunity for the American students to live in the homes of their Danish partners and their lives in the manner of their partners, the American students probably would not have had the same experiences. This exchange format helps students to attend to cultural differences that may remain hidden from them on a traditional vacation.

Ambiguity Tolerance

Tolerance for ambiguity refers to a person's ability to navigate and overcome a new situation which is unfamiliar to that person. Through this exchange, students traveled to

Denmark for the first time, encountered various cultural differences, and tended to see the experience in a positive manner. One could expect then, an increase in this construct as the students would ideally recognize the gravity of their experiences that they have had. Yet, the GEMS data revealed a statistically significant decrease in ambiguity tolerance.

While I initially predicted an increase in ambiguity tolerance, it is possible that the self-report design may have influenced the decrease in this overall construct. As mentioned before, only one student had traveled to Denmark prior to this exchange. Similarly, none of the students on the exchange had ever had major travel experiences without the lead of their parents. Prior to traveling, the ambiguous situations of which students had been a part may not have challenged them to the same degree as their experiences in Denmark. For this reason, ahead of the trip the students may have perceived a strong ability in themselves to handle these situations, but their time in Denmark may have forced them to face greater-than-expected obstacles which challenged their initial beliefs. While it would be difficult to fully understand their tolerance level prior to traveling, using the interventions to highlight student behavior during ambiguous situations could help them to realize their successes in overcoming these novel experiences.

Knowledge of the Host Site

Prior to this exchange, only one participant had traveled to Denmark. Aside from the Vikings, the 1848 Constitution, and World War II in 10th grade, and discussions of comparative economic policies in 12th grade, students do not receive a lot of information about Denmark through the curriculum at the two schools the study participants attended. On the GEMS, not only did the knowledge of the host site subscale display a statistically significant increase from the pre-test to the post-test. Each of the subscale's individual questions also had statistically significant increases.

The results for this theme came as no surprise as students traveled to Denmark with little knowledge of the country. What the GEMS could not quantify, however, was the range of knowledge that the students developed. Students reported learning about Danish design, pop-culture, bike culture, politics, and general cultural customs. The structure of this program made it easy for students to learn a significant amount of information about Denmark during a short time period. Prior to leaving the United States, students attended evening meetings that made them aware of what they will see while in Denmark. During the trip, they attended classes at school focused on Danish history and culture that provided special emphasis on topics relevant to today such as Denmark's healthcare system. Living with a partner throughout the duration of the exchange, however, may have provided the most significant influence on student knowledge of Denmark. Dinner table conversations allowed the host families to share their personal experiences. Even spending time wandering around Copenhagen with their partners helped to enlighten students. When something crossed their minds, the students had the ability to ask their partners or host families for clarification or knowledge, such as Bari did regarding the different types of flags that the Danes use (Bari Interview). Full immersion places students in a situation where even when doing things that would normally seem like leisure time, they still find themselves confronted with new information and experiences.

Openness to Diversity

In Denmark, students encountered political beliefs, economic ideas, and cultural values dissimilar to the beliefs, ideas, and values of the United States. Prior to traveling, each participant had an individual level of understanding regarding these differences, and some students had even developed opinions and judgements regarding these differences. As expected,

this exchange showed a growth in openness to diversity both on the GEMS and in the qualitative data.

On the GEMS, students reported a statistically significant increase in openness to diversity. They also reported a statistically significant increase in openness when considering a person with whom they could become good friends. An increase did occur when considering a future partner or spouse for a sibling, but not with a statistically significant difference. A possible explanation for not having a significant change regarding their siblings' future spouses is that students may not have had situations in Denmark that would have required them to such a situation and therefore may not have experienced disorientation and undergone critical-reflection on the issue. By nature of the exchange, however, students did process the idea of becoming friends with a person of a different culture because they developed friendships with the Danish students in the program.

An advantage to a cultural immersion where a student lives the life of his or her partner is that when they come into contact with or develop feelings towards something different to them, they get to have conversations and ask questions of an expert in the culture (i.e., their partner). These conversations may not always be comfortable, but they create a foundation for cultural empathy. Early on in the exchange, many students developed friendships with their partner which likely made it easier for them to listen to their partner and their host families on issues that they may not have understood or on which they have differences in opinion. The other coordinators of this program and I encouraged students from the very beginning to encounter differences without passing judgement. Specifically, we discouraged students from identifying something as “weird” when they encountered something unfamiliar as this term has a negative connotation. While students may not have wanted to adopt Danish cultural, political, or

economic elements for themselves, they came to appreciate that the different ways of living which exist throughout the world, can and do work for other people.

Resilience

Considering the fact that when students face disorientation and through critical reflection grow in their ability to handle new situations, I expected students to increase their levels of resilience during participation in this exchange. While according to the GEMS data, there was no statistically significant growth in resilience during this exchange, qualitative data displayed changes among students' resilience.

Within the next few years, all of the students in this exchange will enter into new phases of their lives. Some will enroll in college, some will enter the workforce, and others may take a completely different path. Regardless of their future, the students will encounter new situations and people. In their journals and interviews, the students reflected on this reality when they discussed how their experiences in Denmark could have a positive impact later in their lives. Students reported recognizing their own abilities to travel somewhere new without their parents and that they feel as though they can handle more independence. With regards to encountering new people, many students reported greater understanding of cultural differences and comfort in meeting people of various cultures. While the GEMS data did not reveal a statistically significant difference, students described their own significant processing regarding their resilience and personal growth in the face of new situation.

Best Practices

In Chapter II, I discussed the debate over the effectiveness of long-term and short-term study abroad programs. Research suggested that long-term programs offer greater benefits than short-term programs (Dwyer, 2004), but short-term programs can still offer many benefits to

students (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004). As discussed in Chapter II, STSAs present challenges over LTSAs in that shorter stays abroad do not always afford students enough opportunities to organically overcome disorientation that they encounter, nor do students always recognize disorienting thoughts when they develop. Effective interventions can help students to process these thoughts and engage in the critical reflection necessary for personal growth. In order to maximize the benefits regarding intercultural learning, program coordinators need to carefully structure their programs with research-based best practices (Goldstein, 2019; Stemler et al., 2014). In designing this program, we utilized many of these research-based best practices.

Clear Direction and Goals. Like all STSAs, this Danish Exchange Program had limited time to develop intercultural learning. Having a structured program with clear goals that the students can easily understand helped to drive the program's success (Nguyen, 2017; Sklad et al., 2016; Wong, 2015). From the very beginning of the program, we informed students that this exchange would develop their understanding of Danish culture by immersing them in that culture. We also told students that in coming to understand Danish identity, they would also investigate sources of their own identity. When some of the discomfort of the students bordered feeling like they were not having enough of a vacation experience, we as the coordinators could remind them of the goals of the program.

Mentorship and Guidance. The short duration of this trip made it difficult for students to naturally engage in the process of overcoming culture shock (Goldstein, 2019). As a coordinator, I acted as a mentor for students. In individual conversations or the group interviews, my role was to help students recognize when they were engaging in the process of developing their intercultural competence. For most of the students, this exchange provides them with a completely new experience, so my job as a mentor is especially important.

Reflection Through Discussion. Discussions while participating in an STSA can help students to process their experiences and receive feedback to challenge their beliefs and assumptions about foreign cultures (Gibbs, 2015; Nguyen, 2014). On this exchange, the group interview sessions played a major role in the intercultural development of the students by providing opportunities for them to identify their sources of discomfort and to process the feelings associated with these sources. In each session, students discussed their frustrations related to the differences between the American and Danish students regarding. The students reported feeling that their Danish partners disrespected them in planning fewer activities than in the United States. The American students expressed that they believed that were missing important experiences such as seeing historically and culturally significant tourist sites. As a couple students expressed their frustration, other students joined the conversations. Some students appeared to have thought about this frustration, while others seemed to only recognize it through the discussion.

Regardless of origin, these sessions allowed the American students to recognize and express their perceived discomfort, but then offered me an opportunity to challenge their thinking from a different lens. In each group I provided the students insight into the fact that while in the United States, a few of the Danes complained to their teachers that they felt that they American students treated them like young children when they planned every minute of the American leg. This information caused the American students in the group sessions to reflect on the cultural differences that may have caused these feelings for both groups of students. Without the group sessions, this type of intervention may not have taken place and students may not have learned this important cultural lesson.

In addition to student recognition of scheduling differences, the group interview sessions also provided opportunities for students to understand the purpose of cultural exchanges. Advertisements for the Danish Exchange Program highlight the fact that participants travel to Denmark. For many students, traveling to a new country gives them an occasion to see sites that they would normally see highlighted in post-cards and travel books. For Denmark, such sites may include Nyhavn or Kroneborg Castle. During the group sessions students reported that in addition to frustration over perceived lack of interest in planning among the Danes, they wanted to see more sites of significance. The group sessions allow students time to reflect on this type of thinking and consider other options. In a discussion about trip expectations with Group 3, I was able to offer students an alternative viewpoint:

We're used to a certain way of life and doing things a certain way, there's a certain anxiety when we're confronted with doing things differently but ... part of this exchange is living the life the Danes do. It's not about coming over here and seeing all the sites... You're gonna [sic] see them, you will... you may not see all of them, but you're all getting a great experience to live in someone else's home, and actually see how this different culture works. And it might not be the culture you would choose to be a part of, and maybe it is, but you're seeing how it works and you're actually getting that valuable experience because we do plan everything, and they don't but you're learning about how someone else does something. (Group 3 Interview)

In a Long-Term Study Abroad program students would more likely come to this type of conclusion themselves as the extended time offers them a greater number of opportunities to recognize and reflect upon their thoughts. In an STSA, interventions such as these group sessions help to identify for students these thoughts, offer alternative perspectives, and let students reflect.

Reflection Through Writing. Reflective journals can enhance cultural understanding and self-awareness among STSA participants (Gaia, 2015). Through anonymous journals, students put their thoughts into words regarding the positive and negative aspects of the trip to Denmark. In their writing, students formulated their opinions on matters such as scheduling differences and Danish manners. When we met for the group interviews, the students could engage in conversation because they had already started to realize and understand their thoughts.

Pre-Orientation. Students need proper context about their upcoming abroad experiences in order to maximize their intercultural learning (Bell & Anscombe, 2013; Wallace Fuentes, 2015). Providing students with an awareness of the itinerary for an exchange can help them better attend to the specific details of a foreign culture (Goldstein, 2019). While the other coordinators and I would have liked to allow the exchange to unfold for each student individually, we used our pre-departure meetings to remove unnecessary surprises that may distract students from intercultural learning. In these meetings we informed students of the places they would visit, shared the structure of the school days and the topics of the classes, and covered travel logistics and schedules. We also prepared students for encountering cultural differences through activities intended to keep them open to disorienting situations. While in Denmark, we used these meetings as a reference point in conversations with students. These meetings also allowed them to truly immerse themselves in Danish culture as they did not need to distract themselves from their experience with anxiousness over insignificant details.

Immersion and Direct Contact. Cultural immersion is a very important method of intercultural learning as becoming a part of a foreign culture can force students to challenge their beliefs, assumptions, and stereotypes (Donnelly-Smith, 2009; Ritz, 2011). So much of the learning that took place on this exchange occurred in the Danish homes and when the

participants went out with their Danish partners. In the interviews students reported many instances of enlightening conversations with their host families and partners while sitting at their dinner tables. When visiting Copenhagen, the American students had Danish partners who could answer questions and also provide a model of how to behave in Denmark. Even just seeing Danish cultural elements succeed in Danish society (i.e. many of the welfare-state principles) can really only occur when fully immersed in Danish culture.

What Does It All Mean?

According to Bennett (1993), cultural understanding and empathy develops through a process. Based on the data that I collected, the students on this exchange displayed growth with regards to their intercultural competence. While the GEMS did not always reveal statistically significant changes between the pre-test and the post-test, the qualitative data displayed that the students thought about a lot of different topics related to intercultural competence while on the trip which led to their own personal growth and awareness of cultural differences.

Limitations

This study did have limitations that may have impacted the results of this study including (a) researcher bias, (b) the design of the survey instrument, and (c) the sample size and selection process. In this section I describe these limitations and their influences on this study.

Research Bias

Approximately six years ago, I began this exchange program. Over that period of time it has become an important component of my teaching career. Currently, I coordinate the program with two other teachers. Additionally, I have been a part of this school community for eight years. Students could have altered responses on the surveys, in their journals, or during the interviews in order to make themselves appear more culturally tolerant to someone they see on a

near daily basis. In order to minimize the possibility that students could have altered their responses, I had students complete the surveys and journals anonymously. While students received a number to ensure that their pre-test and post-test aligned for purposes of analysis, I informed students that I would not consult their numbers in order to analyze the data other than for the 6 scores in the middle of the pre-test to identify interviewees. Students also received pseudonyms for their journals.

As coordinator of the program and also the researcher conducting interviews, bias could have influenced my role in the individual and group interviews. As a practitioner-participant, I had to be careful about my questioning during the interviews. In order to minimize this potential bias in the group interviews, I allowed the students to lead the discussions. As themes developed, however, I questioned and clarified what they said, but I did not require each student to answer specific questions. This method allowed the students to report what they had experienced and wanted to discuss, rather than what I would have deemed important. In terms of the interviews, I utilized a semi-structured method in order to provide prompts to start a discussion, but this method allowed the interviewees to direct their thoughts and comments.

Survey Instrument

The GEMS provided a detailed and effective survey to measure differences in intercultural competence prior to and after traveling to Denmark. The developers of the GEMS, however, designed the instrument for university level participants of STSA programs. Because of the education level of typical high school students, some of the items may be beyond participant understanding. For example, students may not have had many opportunities in school to learn about and understand the present system of distribution of the world's wealth and resources, or the meaning of being a global citizen in the worldwide community. This lack of knowledge or

understanding could have affected the results of the analysis, although most of the items did seem to engage students at a level of understanding typical of high school students.

Sample Size and Demographics

While I had the opportunity to collect a lot of data because of the multiple sources of information, a major limitation of the study was the relatively small number of students who participated in this exchange. The 29 participants represent less than 1% of the total population of these two high schools. Thus, this small number of participants prevents generalizability beyond this particular exchange group.

In addition to the limited number of students, student demographics also restrict generalizability. While this program does cost less than any other overseas experience offered at these two high schools, a price of \$1,900 remains out of reach for some students. As a result of this cost, students in this program tend to come from families who do not struggle financially, so the participants do not offer a representative sample of the students at these schools, let alone high school students in general. Because the demographics of this study do not generalize, I focused on the experiences of these specific students in relation to the Transformative Learning Theory and the development of their intercultural competence.

Generalizability

According to the Transformative Learning Theory, people learn through critical reflection after overcoming a disorienting dilemma. While students experienced disorientation in Denmark, the results of this study cannot generalize to other geographic locations.

Denmark rates very high in the ability of an average person to have a fluent conversation in English that includes using “nuanced language in social situations, reading an advanced English text, [and] negotiating a contract with a native English Speaker” (Education First, 2019).

While Danes speak Danish as their first language, the lack of language barriers presents fewer obstacles than a country that does not have high levels of English proficiency. Students have immediate opportunities to connect with their partners as the Danish students in this program all speak English fluently, and most people that the American students meet are fluent English speakers.

As a western European country, Denmark shares many cultural values with the United States such as freedom of expression. While specific behaviors may differ between the two countries, many similarities do exist. Traveling to a country that does not share many cultural values could provide too much disorientation to meaningfully overcome in the span of a ten-day exchange.

Participants in this study attend two large, mid-Atlantic public high schools. Yet this study reflects only the 29 students who took part in this specific exchange. A group of students from another high school, or even another group of students from schools that were part of this study could yield different results. Additionally, a different group of Danish students or different partner pairings could also affect the results of this study.

Implications for Educators

By nature, educators look for the most effective methods to reach their students. Gone are the days where students spend their school day walking from one lecture to another. As curriculum designers encourage more meaningful forms of learning than in the past, many educators look to provide authentic experiences that allow students to apply the information that they learn in school. This type of program can provide students authentic learning opportunities as they experience a foreign culture firsthand.

Expand Foreign Exchange Opportunities

Many secondary school mission statements include preparing students for the modern globalized society. Increasing contact with foreign cultures serve as the hallmark to this society, and schools can prepare students by offering opportunities for intercultural contact. The group of students in this study displayed critical thought with their experiences and in many aspects came to view cultural differences that they encountered without judgement. Schools that have the ability to form a connection with a foreign school can utilize a model such as this program in order to foster intercultural growth in their students. While most secondary schools probably cannot send students overseas for the time required of a long-term study abroad where this growth can occur organically, certain interventions can help this progression to occur. The exchange model in general puts students in direct contact with a foreign culture in a way that a study tour or family vacation cannot. Pre-departure meetings allow students to develop an awareness of the challenges that they may face and the experiences that they will have while overseas. In-school lessons with both Danes and Americans create a forum for cultural comparison that educates students in a way visiting a historic site cannot. Group interview sessions during the trip provide opportunities to help students to recognize feelings of disorientation and engage in critical reflection which helps to foster cultural empathy. Lastly, school provides a forum to learn, but experience adds meaning because it allows students to follow trails that pique their interests. Students on this exchange developed their intercultural competence in individual ways as they attended to what appealed to them, rather than what a teacher directed to them. Secondary schools can use this model to provide their students with authentic forms of learning which augments lessons they receive in their regular classes.

Domestic Partnerships

Traveling to another country places students in a foreign context which may challenge their understanding of the world and its various cultures, but educators do not need to limit themselves to overseas travel in order to expose students to various cultures. For example, the two schools involved in this study have 4 major metropolitan areas within a 3-hour radius as well as numerous small cities and rural communities that offer many different cultural experiences in terms of living styles, ethnicity, and socioeconomic statuses. Partnerships with schools in different settings can help develop cultural empathy in students just as a partnership with a school in another country. The structure of these possible programs may look different than this exchange as close proximity may reduce the need for sharing a home with a partner, but programs could accompany activities with interventions such as preparation meetings and group intervention sessions with the same purpose as this exchange's interventions.

Implications for Future Research

In terms of developing intercultural competence, this exchange yielded significant results. High school students can maximize the benefits of an STSA exchange if the program utilizes carefully implemented interventions before and during the exchange. This study did not, however, answer all of the questions that exist with secondary level overseas experiences. With this limitation in mind, I will summarize in this section possible future studies related to the topic of intercultural competence development among high school students participating in an STSA.

Study Tours versus Exchange Programs in Secondary Schools

Multiple companies including Education First, Explorica, and Proma Tours offer overseas experiences for high school students. High schools seem to tend to opt for study tours during which students stay in hotels and travel as an isolated group to sites of historical and

cultural significance. While students on these tours have opportunities to spend time in a foreign country, future research could investigate the relationship between these tours and intercultural development in order to determine if any significant differences exist between these programs and immersive exchanges (i.e., this Danish Exchange Program).

Compare the Effects of Various High School Overseas Programs

More than a few high schools offer foreign exchange programs, including to Denmark. Each program has unique characteristics such as offering course credit for participation, participation as only one American school as opposed to two schools, and differences in structure both in Denmark and prior to travelling. As very little literature exists regarding high school travel programs, future research could investigate the effects of differences between programs in order to identify elements that best assist students in intercultural growth.

Expand on Bennett's DMIS

This study compared a pre-test and post-test in order to uncover changes in intercultural competence among high school foreign exchange participants. Along with this quantitative data, student interviews and journals collected data during and after the exchange took place. While the GEMS provided valuable information prior to traveling, it would have been interesting to do more qualitative research prior to traveling in order to better understand student opinions and thoughts regarding intercultural competence. With such a study I would like to better utilize Bennett's Developmental Model for Intercultural Sensitivity to code information between the pre and post-interviews to study possible movement along this model's continuum.

Longitudinal Effects

For this study I used the rationale that intercultural competence can help students in our increasingly globalized society. While the data of this study revealed development of

intercultural competence among students, future research could investigate the lasting effects of STSA experiences. Many of the participants will enter college within two years of the end of this study where they may encounter ideas and values different from their own beliefs. Additionally, participants may take jobs after college with which they could come into contact with various cultures. Future research could see if any of the themes that developed during this exchange affected their experiences in college or with future jobs.

Develop an Intercultural Measurement Device for Secondary Schools

While the GEMS provided a great quantitative measure for this study, the developers of the instrument designed it for use with university-level STSA programs. A few of the items on the survey could have caused confusion in students. For example, students in high school may not have had enough education to consider the present system of distribution of the world's wealth and resources or what it means to be a member of the worldwide community. Future research could look to adapt the GEMS to high school students so as to better reflect the cultural growth that may occur in students at this level.

Summary

Traditionally, college study abroad programs occurred over the course of a semester or a full academic year. By taking part in a study abroad program, students hope to build on their knowledge of the world and understanding of other cultures. Rather than take a vacation, living in a foreign culture for an extended period of time allows people to learn important subtleties of that culture. In terms of study abroad programs, longer stays abroad have greater benefits than shorter stays (Dwyer, 2004). At the college level, not everyone can afford to take a semester or a year abroad, so a short-term program seems more attractive than not studying abroad at all. Fortunately for those making this decision, short-term programs do provide significant benefits

to participants (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004). Due to curriculum constraints and graduation requirements, very few high school administrations could allow their students to study abroad for a semester or year, so a short-term program seems most realistic for students at the secondary level. With very little research into high school overseas programs, this study supports the notion that secondary students can benefit from participating in STSA programs. Not only did students involved in this study grow with regards to their intercultural competence, they also displayed abilities to critically reflect on their own lives and experiences. Even if some students did not display a significant amount of growth, all students in this study displayed an ability to process their experiences with openness and empathy which will allow them in the future to encounter cultural differences with greater ease than if they had not participated in the program. This study exemplifies the importance of continuing research into the benefits STSA programs as part of students' high school experiences.

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Appendix A: GEMS Survey

Student Number:

The Exchange Program is interested in students' assessments of their learning their time in Denmark. We are using the Global Education Measurement Scale (GEMS) developed by Noel Shadowen, Lisa Chieffo, and Nancy Guerra of the University of Delaware. This form is to be taken only by students who have completed an assent form, and whose parents have completed a consent form.

It is very important to receive the most accurate answers possible. When completing the assessment, please answer honestly and truthfully based on your feelings right now. Please provide the answers that best reflect you, not the answers you believe we would want to see. Your responses will not affect your participation in the Exchange Program in any way.

A. Please mark the response that most closely aligns with your feelings about the following statements:

| <u>Answer Key</u> - Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. It is interesting to spend time talking with people from other cultures. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. People in my home country are entitled to the standard of living they can afford, even if it has a small negative impact on the environment. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. In addition to being a citizen of my own country, I think of myself as a global citizen. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. It is important that universities promote understanding among students of varying backgrounds. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. I support policies which maintain the present system of distribution of the world's wealth and resources. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. The needs of my home country and its citizens should be the highest priority when my country's leaders negotiate with other countries. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. I like trying to understand people's behaviors in the context of their own culture. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. I feel a strong connection with humanity worldwide. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9. People in my home country can learn from people in other parts of the world. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10. I identify as a member of the worldwide community. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 11. My home country's values are most likely the best in the world. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 12. I feel irritated when people from other countries do not understand how things are done in my home country. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

B. Please check the response that you think most closely aligns with your personality.

Note: "Ambiguity" refers to something that is open to more than one interpretation, something that it is uncertain, or something that is not clearly defined.

| <u>Answer Key -</u> | Never | Sometimes | Frequently | Always |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 13. I am comfortable with ambiguous situations. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 14. I prefer situations where there is some uncertainty about potential outcomes or solutions. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 15. I enjoy solving problems that must be viewed from multiple perspectives. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 16. I feel that I can handle ambiguous situations. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 17. I prefer to have new experiences rather than familiar or routine experiences. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 18. I feel competent navigating ambiguous situations. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 19. I enjoy exploring new places where I am unfamiliar with the geography or the people. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

C. Please answer the following questions regarding your knowledge of your program site:

| <u>Answer Key -</u> | No | Maybe | Probably | Definitely |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 20. I have sufficient knowledge of my host site to explain a current issue there to a friend or family member who has never been there. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 21. I can discuss with confidence at least two historic events that are important to the population of my host site. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 22. I can discuss with confidence the system of government and politics in my host site. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 23. I have sufficient knowledge of my host site to have a discussion about a current social or economic issue of importance to the area. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 24. I can explain with confidence what the community is like at my host site. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

D. Imagine you just met a new person who is a potential friend. Could you become good friends with this person if you discovered that the person...

| <u>Answer Key -</u> | No | Maybe | Probably | Definitely |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 25. ... holds different political beliefs and opinions than you? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 26. ... is from a different socioeconomic background than you? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 27. ... has different religious beliefs than you? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 28. ...has a different sexual orientation than you? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 29. ...is from a different cultural background than you? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 30. ...is from a different racial or ethnic background than you? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 31. ...is from a different country than you? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

E. Imagine that your sibling or best friend is considering marrying someone. You meet this person and discover that he or she has one of the following characteristics. Would you support/accept the relationship if this person . . .

| <u>Answer Key -</u> | No | Maybe | Probably | Definitely |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 32. ...holds different political beliefs and opinions than you? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 33. ... is from a different socioeconomic background than you? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 34. ... has different religious beliefs than you? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 35. ... is from a different cultural background than you? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 36. ... is from a different racial or ethnic background than you? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 37. ...is from a different country than you? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

F. Please mark the response that most closely aligns with your feelings about the following statements:

| <u>Answer Key</u> - | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 38. I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 39. I have a hard time making it through stressful events. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 40. It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 41. It is hard for me to snap back when something bad happens. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 42. I usually come through difficult times with little trouble. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 43. I tend to take a long time to get over set-backs in my life. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

G. Please take a few minutes to tell us about your prior travel experience. Describe any experiences that have been particularly important to you, or even life changing?

Adapted from:

Shadowen, N.L., Chieffo, L.P., & Guerra, N.G. (2015). The global engagement measurement scale (GEMS): A new scale for assessing the impact of education abroad and campus internationalization. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad* 26, 231-247.

Appendix B: Individual Interview Questions

1. Describe your travel experience prior to taking part in this exchange.
2. Describe (your general openness your feelings and thoughts?) to new experiences and others' differing attitudes and beliefs.
3. When confronted with new cultural elements, did you experience any internal resistance?
 - a. Were you able to overcome this resistance?
 - b. If yes, what strategies did you use? use?
 - c. If not, explain how you feel at this point?
4. What activities, customs, experiences etc. made you uncomfortable while in Denmark?
 - a. Describe the thoughts, feelings, or emotions you had while engaging in these activities, customs, experiences, etc.
 - b. Having completed the program, describe your current thoughts feelings, or emotions regarding these activities, customs, experiences, etc.
5. What activities, customs, experiences, etc. seemed most comfortable in Denmark?
 - a. What made these activities, experiences, customs, etc. comfortable for you?
 - b. Describe your thoughts, feelings, or emotions regarding these activities while you were. In Denmark.
6. Describe your thoughts, feelings, or emotions regarding living in the house of someone of a different culture (thoughts etc. while in Denmark).
 - a. What are your biggest takeaways from that experience (positive or negative)?
7. Describe your comfort level based on the presence of other American students during the exchange?
 - a. Did that change? Why or why not?
8. How have your prior experiences influenced your time in Denmark?
9. Has this trip influenced your attitudes towards multicultural elements such as politics, religion, pop-culture, etc.? Why or why not? If yes, how?
10. Moving forward in your life, what, if anything, can you take from this exchange experience?

Appendix C: IRB Approval



Office of Research and Sponsored Programs | West Chester University | Wayne Hall
West Chester, PA 19383 | 610-436-3557 | www.wcupa.edu

TO: Jeffrey Mapes & Heather Schugar

FROM: Nicole M. Cattano, Ph.D.
Co-Chair, WCU Institutional Review Board (IRB)

DATE: 2/16/2019

Protocol ID # 20190218C

This Protocol ID number must be used in all communications about this project with the IRB.

Project Title: Development of Intercultural Competence and Cultural Empathy in High School Students Participating in a Short-Term Study Abroad Exchange

Date of Approval: 2/16/2019

☒ **Expedited Approval**

This protocol has been approved under the new updated 45 CFR 46 common rule that went in to effect January 21, 2019. As a result, this project will not require continuing review. Any revisions to this protocol that are needed will require approval by the WCU IRB. Upon completion of the project, you are expected to submit appropriate closure documentation. Please see www.wcupa.edu/research/irb.aspx for more information.

Any adverse reaction by a research subject is to be reported immediately through the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs via email at irb@wcupa.edu.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicole M. Cattano'.

Co-Chair of WCU IRB

WCU Institutional Review Board (IRB)
IORG#: IORG0004242
IRB#: IRB00005030
FWA#: FWA00014155

Appendix D: Informed Consent

Project Title: Short Term Study Abroad Immersion and Intercultural Competence Development

Investigators: Jeffrey Mapes, Heather Schugar

Jeff Mapes
Social Studies Teacher



Heather Schugar
Literacy Department
West Chester University



Would you like to grant permission for your child to take part in a research project? The research project is being done by Jeffrey Mapes as part of his doctoral dissertation. You may ask Jeffrey Mapes any questions to help you understand this study. If you would like to provide consent, West Chester University requires that you agree and sign this consent form. If you choose to grant consent for your child to be a part of this study, you have the right to change your mind and stop their participation in the study at any time. If you don't want your child to be a part of this study, it won't affect your child's participation in the [REDACTED] Danish Exchange. The purpose of the study is to investigate changes in intercultural competence among high school students participating in a Short-Term Study Abroad exchange program. If you decide to allow your child to be a part of this study, they will be asked to take a 25 minute pre-assessment, complete two entries in a travel journal, participate in a 45 minute solo interview to discuss their individual exchange experiences, and take a 25 minute post-assessment. Students may feel anxiety about participating in the interviews to share their experiences. Data collected from this study will help schools design their study abroad programs to best prepare students to work with people of diverse background.

1. **What is the purpose of this study?**
 - Investigate changes in intercultural competence among high school students participating in a Short-Term Study Abroad exchange program.
2. **If you decide to allow your child to be a part of this study, they will be asked to do the following:**
 - Take a 25 minute pre-assessment.
 - Complete two entries in travel journal.
 - Participate in a 45 minute solo interview to discuss their experiences in Denmark.
 - Take a 25 minute post-assessment.
 - Overall, participating in this study will take an additional three hours outside of the time required to participate in the [REDACTED] Danish Exchange.
3. **Are there any experimental medical treatments?**
 - No
4. **Is there any risk to me?**
 - Possible risks or sources of discomfort include: Students may feel anxiety about participating in the interviews to share their experiences.
 - If you become upset and wish to speak with someone, you may speak with Heather Schugar at West Chester University.
 - If you or your child experiences discomfort, you have the right to withdraw at any time.

5. **Is there any benefit to me?**

Benefits to your child may include:

This research is not designed to provide students with any personal benefits. However, by participating in this study, data will be collected which may inform high school study abroad programs with information that can help students prepare to work with people of diverse backgrounds, appreciate differences in global attitudes, and develop into competent adults ready to enter and succeed in the globalized workforce. Students may also experience growth in cultural development through self-reflection. In the future, schools may benefit from this research by having a template to create their own exchange programs to help their students become better 21st century learners and globalized citizens.

6. **How will you protect my privacy?**

- The session will be recorded.
- Interviews will be recorded for data analysis.
- Your records will be private. Only Jeffrey Mapes, Heather Schugar, and the IRB will have access to your name and responses.
- Your name will **not** be used in any reports.
- Records will be stored:
 - Password Protected File/Computer
- Records will be destroyed Three Years After Study Completion

7. **Do I get paid to take part in this study?**

- No

8. **Who do I contact in case of research related injury?**

- For any questions with this study, contact:
 - **Primary Investigator:** Jeffrey Mapes at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]
 - **Faculty Sponsor:** Heather Schugar at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

For any questions about your rights in this research study, contact the ORSP at 610-436-3557.

I, _____ (your name), have read this form and I understand the statements in this form. I know that if I am uncomfortable with this study, I can stop at any time. I know that it is not possible to know all possible risks in a study, and I think that reasonable safety measures have been taken to decrease any risk.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Witness Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix E: Student Assent Form

Student Assent Form 11W

My name is _____. I am an 11th grade student at _____ High School and a participant in the Danish Exchange Program. I know my parents agree that I can be in a study with my program coordinator, Mr. Mapes. In this study, Mr. Mapes will run pre-departure meetings and guided reflection sessions in Denmark. He will give me a survey to take before and after I leave, and may also ask me questions about my experience in the program.

(Student Signature)

Student Assent Form 11E

My name is _____. I am an 11th grade student at _____ High School and a participant in the Danish Exchange Program. I know my parents agree that I can be in a study with my program coordinator, Mr. Mapes. In this study, Mr. Mapes will run pre-departure meetings and guided reflection sessions in Denmark. He will give me a survey to take before and after I leave, and may also ask me questions about my experience in the program.

(Student Signature)

Student Assent Form 12W

My name is _____. I am a 12th grade student at _____ High School and a participant in the Danish Exchange Program. I know my parents agree that I can be in a study with my program coordinator, Mr. Mapes. In this study, Mr. Mapes will run pre-departure meetings and guided reflection sessions in Denmark. He will give me a survey to take before and after I leave, and may also ask me questions about my experience in the program.

(Student Signature)

Student Assent Form 12E

My name is _____. I am a 12th grade student at _____ High School and a participant in the Danish Exchange Program. I know my parents agree that I can be in a study with my program coordinator, Mr. Mapes. In this study, Mr. Mapes will run pre-departure meetings and guided reflection sessions in Denmark. He will give me a survey to take before and after I leave, and may also ask me questions about my experience in the program.

(Student Signature)

Appendix F: Parent Meeting Script

I am a teacher at [REDACTED] High School and the coordinator of the Danish Exchange Program. I am also a graduate student at West Chester University. I am conducting a research study examining the experience of exchange participants with regards to the development of their intercultural competence and cultural empathy. Through this research I will investigate changes in intercultural competence while taking part in the exchange program.

I am requesting that you consider allowing your son or daughter participate in this study. I have an Informed Consent Form for you to review. It includes a space for you to sign if you agree to allow your son or daughter participate. There is also space for your son or daughter to sign. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have. If you are willing to participate in this study. If you agree to participate, I will have another form for your son or daughter to sign.

If you have any questions, please contact me by phone or email at the number or address listed above. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Thank you.

Appendix G: GEMS Data Frequencies

Cultural Engagement Data Frequencies

| | | Strongly Disagree | | Disagree | | Agree | | Strongly Agree | |
|--|-----------|-------------------|------|----------|------|-------|------|----------------|------|
| | | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| It is interesting to spend time talking with people from other cultures. | Pre-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 10.3 | 26 | 89.7 |
| | Post-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 6.9 | 27 | 93.1 |
| People in my home country are entitled to the standard of living they can afford, even if it has a small negative impact on the environment. | Pre-Test | 2 | 6.9 | 8 | 27.6 | 15 | 51.7 | 4 | 13.8 |
| | Post-Test | 1 | 3.4 | 7 | 24.1 | 15 | 51.7 | 6 | 20.7 |
| In addition to being a citizen of my own country, I think of myself as a global citizen. | Pre-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 3.4 | 21 | 72.4 | 7 | 24.1 |
| | Post-Test | 1 | 3.4 | 4 | 13.8 | 16 | 55.2 | 8 | 27.6 |
| It is important that universities promote understanding among students of varying backgrounds. | Pre-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 9 | 31.0 | 20 | 69.0 |
| | Post-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 8 | 27.6 | 21 | 72.4 |
| I support policies which maintain the present system of distribution of the world's wealth and resources. | Pre-Test | 3 | 10.3 | 6 | 20.7 | 15 | 51.7 | 4 | 13.8 |
| | Post-Test | 2 | 6.9 | 12 | 41.4 | 15 | 51.7 | 0 | 0.0 |
| The needs of my home country and its citizens should be the highest priority when my country's leaders negotiate with other countries. | Pre-Test | 1 | 3.4 | 14 | 48.3 | 9 | 31.0 | 5 | 17.2 |
| | Post-Test | 1 | 3.4 | 11 | 37.9 | 14 | 48.3 | 3 | 10.3 |
| I like trying to understand people's behaviors in the context of their own culture. | Pre-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 9 | 31.0 | 18 | 62.1 |
| | Post-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 6 | 20.7 | 23 | 79.3 |
| I feel a strong connection with humanity worldwide. | Pre-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 10.3 | 19 | 65.5 | 7 | 24.1 |
| | Post-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 6 | 20.7 | 11 | 37.9 | 11 | 37.9 |
| People in my home country can learn from people in other parts of the world. | Pre-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 4 | 13.8 | 25 | 86.2 |
| | Post-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 4 | 13.8 | 25 | 86.2 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|---|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|
| I identify as a member of the worldwide community. | Pre-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 3.4 | 19 | 65.5 | 9 | 31.0 |
| | Post-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 6.9 | 14 | 48.3 | 13 | 44.8 |
| My home country's values are most likely the best in the world. | Pre-Test | 5 | 17.2 | 20 | 69.0 | 3 | 10.3 | 0 | 0.0 |
| | Post-Test | 7 | 24.1 | 17 | 28.6 | 5 | 17.2 | 0 | 0.0 |
| I feel irritated when people from other countries do not understand how things are done in my home country. | Pre-Test | 9 | 31.0 | 19 | 65.5 | 1 | 3.4 | 0 | 0.0 |
| | Post-Test | 8 | 27.6 | 18 | 62.1 | 3 | 10.3 | 0 | 0.0 |

Tolerance for Ambiguity Data Frequencies

| | | Never | | Sometimes | | Frequently | | Always | |
|--|-----------|-------|------|-----------|------|------------|------|--------|------|
| | | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| I am comfortable with ambiguous situations. | Pre-Test | 1 | 3.4 | 10 | 34.5 | 12 | 41.4 | 6 | 20.7 |
| | Post-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 8 | 27.6 | 14 | 48.3 | 7 | 24.1 |
| I prefer situations where there is some uncertainty about potential outcomes or solutions. | Pre-Test | 4 | 13.8 | 17 | 28.6 | 5 | 17.2 | 3 | 10.3 |
| | Post-Test | 1 | 3.4 | 14 | 48.3 | 13 | 44.8 | 1 | 3.4 |
| I enjoy solving problems that must be viewed from multiple perspectives. | Pre-Test | 1 | 3.4 | 8 | 27.6 | 10 | 34.5 | 10 | 34.5 |
| | Post-Test | 1 | 3.4 | 3 | 10.3 | 15 | 51.7 | 10 | 34.5 |
| I feel that I can handle ambiguous situations. | Pre-Test | 1 | 3.4 | 5 | 17.2 | 16 | 55.2 | 7 | 24.1 |
| | Post-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 6 | 20.7 | 15 | 51.7 | 8 | 27.6 |
| I prefer to have new experiences rather than familiar or routine experiences. | Pre-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 6 | 20.7 | 11 | 37.9 | 12 | 41.4 |
| | Post-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 6 | 20.7 | 12 | 41.4 | 11 | 37.9 |
| I feel competent navigating ambiguous situations. | Pre-Test | 1 | 3.4 | 7 | 24.1 | 18 | 62.1 | 3 | 10.3 |
| | Post-Test | 2 | 6.9 | 8 | 27.6 | 14 | 48.3 | 4 | 13.8 |
| | Pre-Test | 1 | 3.4 | 1 | 3.4 | 7 | 24.1 | 20 | 69.0 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------|---|-----|---|-----|---|------|----|------|
| I enjoy exploring new places where I am unfamiliar with the geography or the people. | Post-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 6.9 | 7 | 24.1 | 20 | 69.0 |
|--|-----------|---|-----|---|-----|---|------|----|------|

Knowledge of the Host Site Data Frequencies

| | | No | | Maybe | | Probably | | Definitely | |
|--|-----------|----|------|-------|------|----------|------|------------|------|
| | | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| I have sufficient knowledge of my host site to explain a current issue there to a friend or family member who has never been there | Pre-Test | 11 | 37.9 | 9 | 31.0 | 4 | 13.8 | 5 | 17.2 |
| | Post-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 6 | 20.7 | 14 | 48.3 | 9 | 31.0 |
| I can discuss with confidence at least two historic events that are important to the population of my host site. | Pre-Test | 13 | 44.8 | 11 | 37.9 | 2 | 6.9 | 3 | 10.3 |
| | Post-Test | 1 | 3.4 | 6 | 20.7 | 11 | 37.9 | 11 | 37.9 |
| I can discuss with confidence the system of government and politics in my host site. | Pre-Test | 11 | 37.9 | 11 | 37.9 | 4 | 13.8 | 3 | 10.3 |
| | Post-Test | 1 | 3.4 | 7 | 24.1 | 13 | 44.8 | 8 | 27.6 |
| I have sufficient knowledge of my host site to have a discussion about a current social or economic issue of importance to the area. | Pre-Test | 15 | 51.7 | 8 | 27.6 | 5 | 17.2 | 1 | 3.4 |
| | Post-Test | 1 | 3.4 | 5 | 17.2 | 16 | 55.2 | 7 | 24.1 |
| I can explain with confidence what the community is like at my host site | Pre-Test | 13 | 44.8 | 9 | 31.0 | 5 | 17.2 | 2 | 6.9 |
| | Post-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 3.4 | 7 | 24.1 | 21 | 72.4 |

Openness to Diversity: Friends Data Frequencies

| | | No | | Maybe | | Probably | | Definitely | |
|--|-----------|----|-----|-------|------|----------|------|------------|------|
| | | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| Could you become good friends if the person holds different political beliefs and opinions than you? | Pre-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 6 | 20.7 | 9 | 31.0 | 14 | 48.3 |
| | Post-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 4 | 13.8 | 6 | 20.7 | 19 | 65.5 |
| Could you become good friends if the person is from a different socioeconomic background than you? | Pre-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 5 | 17.2 | 24 | 82.8 |
| | Post-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 10.3 | 26 | 89.7 |
| Could you become good friends if the person has different religious beliefs than you? | Pre-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 3.4 | 6 | 20.7 | 22 | 75.9 |
| | Post-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 3.4 | 3 | 10.3 | 25 | 86.2 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|---|-----|---|-----|---|------|----|------|
| Could you become good friends if the person has a different sexual orientation than you? | Pre-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 3.4 | 5 | 17.2 | 23 | 79.3 |
| | Post-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 6.9 | 27 | 93.1 |
| Could you become good friends if the person is from a different cultural background than you? | Pre-Test | 1 | 3.4 | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 10.3 | 25 | 86.2 |
| | Post-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 29 | 100 |
| Could you become good friends if the person is from a different racial or ethnic background than you? | Pre-Test | 1 | 3.4 | 1 | 3.4 | 1 | 3.4 | 26 | 89.7 |
| | Post-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 29 | 100 |
| Could you become good friends if the person is from a different country than you? | Pre-Test | 1 | 3.4 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 3.4 | 27 | 93.1 |
| | Post-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 3.4 | 1 | 3.4 | 27 | 93.1 |

Openness to Diversity: Siblings Data Frequencies

| | | No | | Maybe | | Probably | | Definitely | |
|---|-----------|----|-----|-------|------|----------|------|------------|------|
| | | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| Would you support your sibling's potential spouse who holds different political beliefs and opinions than you? | Pre-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 4 | 13.8 | 8 | 27.6 | 17 | 58.6 |
| | Post-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 10.3 | 7 | 24.1 | 19 | 65.5 |
| Would you support your sibling's potential spouse who is from a different socioeconomic background than you? | Pre-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 4 | 13.8 | 25 | 86.2 |
| | Post-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 5 | 17.2 | 24 | 82.8 |
| Would you support your sibling's potential spouse who has different religious beliefs than you? | Pre-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 6.9 | 4 | 13.8 | 23 | 79.3 |
| | Post-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 10.3 | 3 | 10.3 | 23 | 79.3 |
| Would you support your sibling's potential spouse who is from a different cultural background than you? | Pre-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 3.4 | 28 | 96.6 |
| | Post-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 6.9 | 27 | 93.1 |
| Would you support your sibling's potential spouse who is from a different racial or ethnic background than you? | Pre-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 3.4 | 2 | 6.9 | 26 | 89.7 |
| | Post-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 6.9 | 27 | 93.1 |
| | Pre-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 10.3 | 26 | 89.7 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|----|------|
| Would you support your sibling's potential spouse who is from a different country than you? | Post-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 3.4 | 28 | 96.6 |
|---|-----------|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|----|------|

Resilience Data Frequencies

| | | Strongly Disagree | | Disagree | | Agree | | Strongly Agree | |
|---|-----------|-------------------|------|----------|------|-------|------|----------------|------|
| | | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times | Pre-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 4 | 13.8 | 20 | 69.0 | 5 | 17.2 |
| | Post-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 4 | 13.8 | 20 | 69.0 | 5 | 17.2 |
| I have a hard time making it through stressful events. | Pre-Test | 3 | 10.3 | 13 | 44.8 | 11 | 37.9 | 2 | 6.9 |
| | Post-Test | 3 | 10.3 | 15 | 51.7 | 9 | 31.0 | 2 | 6.9 |
| It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event. | Pre-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 8 | 27.6 | 21 | 72.4 | 0 | 0.0 |
| | Post-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 8 | 27.6 | 20 | 69.0 | 1 | 3.4 |
| It is hard for me to snap back when something bad happens. | Pre-Test | 3 | 10.3 | 21 | 72.4 | 5 | 17.2 | 0 | 0.0 |
| | Post-Test | 2 | 6.9 | 22 | 75.9 | 5 | 17.2 | 0 | 0.0 |
| I usually come through difficult times with little trouble. | Pre-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 11 | 37.9 | 18 | 62.1 | 0 | 0.0 |
| | Post-Test | 0 | 0.0 | 11 | 37.9 | 17 | 58.6 | 1 | 3.4 |
| I tend to take a long time to get over set-backs in my life | Pre-Test | 5 | 17.2 | 21 | 72.4 | 2 | 6.9 | 1 | 3.4 |
| | Post-Test | 5 | 17.2 | 20 | 69 | 4 | 13.8 | 0 | 0.0 |

Appendix H: Group 1 Interview

Tuesday, April 2, 2019

My comments and questions are in Bold.

- **So this is the third session with Jamie, Bridget, Christina, Kyra, Melissa, Kristen, Stephanie, Cathleen, and Katie. I guess the first thing to kinda start off with for you guys, what are general impressions, everything? Just being here for a few days now, what have you experienced? What have you liked? What have you not liked? All of that, don't be shy.**
- I'm personally confused about the roads.
- Yea, I know.
- **The Roads?**
- I don't know, how they drive.
- Their stop light. It's like yellow, red, green. Like they don't have it red yellow green.
- Yea it goes red, yellow, green. Or green, yellow, red.
- But when we were driving to that museum, we noticed that it like prepares you to go.
- So you're not jumping.
- That's just like preparation.
- Yea, 'cause it goes like red and yellow at the same time. And then green.
- I feel like the roads and stuff you can figure it out. I feel like it makes it more complicated with the stick shift.
- You're watching them do all of this stuff when they're driving, and you're like, how did they do that? Like a lot more complicated than automatic cars.
- **Does anybody at home have a stick shift? Alright so you guys see it. I went to the airport the other day to get the rental car and they brought the car out and I was like, "I can't drive stick shift," and the woman was like, "Well, you asked for a stick shift." That was a huge mistake on my part, so I didn't end up getting that but it would have been a very tough place to learn how to use stick shift.**
- Melanie's dad says he likes manual better because like traffic here is very bad and traffic with a manual is very difficult.
- Yea.
- That's what he said. I don't know how to drive manual so I'm going to take his word on it.
- No, it is. 'Cause I don't know how to do it either but, you're constantly doing stuff.
- Yea like, 'cause I don't know, you have to stop the car entirely, but you can like, kinda roll stop. I don't know, I don't know how it works. I'm not gonna pretend to be an expert.
- **No, I mean hey, it's different driving. Anything else with the roads? Or anything else besides the roads that you found?**
- They're really small.
- **What?**
- Yea I don't know if it's because the cars are smaller.
- Yea well to us it seems like a one lane road. It should be a one lane road.

- The turns are really sharp. Like, my partner hits the curb.
- I noticed a buffer there.
- Yea, in my neighborhood, I noticed these things and you have to go around them, and it's kinda like a one lane thing its weird.
- Yea it's like a one lane bridge and then a one lane road.
- Yea but there's some with the two poles on both sides, and you have to go through it but only one car can fit so you have to like wait.
- And I've noticed there's cars here that aren't in America.
- Yea like the lion.
- Like the poo?
- Yea, my partner said it weird, but I think it's like a Puegot.
- It's like a rich car.
- There's Volkswagons I've never seen before.
- Yea they said some of them aren't in America.
- They don't even have cars like we do. Like their Toyotas are basically small SUVs, with two seats. Like I passed by one.
- I've seen one Jeep. It was like a Jeep Cherokee, not a Wrangler.
- I can't even imagine a wrangler around here.
- Yea, I know.
- **On these roads. So is the only thing you've noticed the cars?**
- *laughing*
- It seems like the most amazing thing.
- Taking shoes off?
- No water in the toilets.
- And there's one for a big flush and one for a small flush.
- *laughing*
- Wait.
- I still don't know. I tried both to see, but they both look the same to me.
- I think its like if you go a lot of stuff in the toilet it's the big one.
- Yea and like some places you can't tell the difference and you're like, "I'm just gonna press one.
- Yea.
- Like here, there's two different sides.
- At my partner's house there's like, a half circle, and a full circle.
- **You guys are picking up on all the, this is the stuff we wanted. Cars and toilets and all that, is what we were hoping for.**
- Like the houses themselves, they're like very clean.
- Yea.
- I was talking to my partner's mom about that. And she said they focus on design more than anything.
- Like, I wish my house looked more like there's.
- Everything is like, white and black so it looks cleaner.
- There's no like color.

- And I find like hard for me, I mean Americans probably do this, is when you take the shoes off when you first walk in, and I'm always scared to put my, well she has dogs that eat your shoes so I have to like bring them to my room. But like, when I get dressed in the morning I can't put them on I have to carry them until I get to the door because I'm scared I'm being rude walking in the house with shoes because everything is so white and clean and I'm like, "Oh gosh."
- My partner's family built her house like seven years ago, her mom told me she designed it so they'd have more windows.
- My partner did that two years ago except so its like even more now, they completely took down the entire building based on their design.
- Yea it's more like window oriented hygge.
- **Have you picked up one why that might be? Like hearing you talk about the houses being generally inside like, decorated inside with white walls and usually lighter color floors?**
- And mirrors to make it feel bigger, because they're usually like smaller, so I feel like the mirrors kinds make it bigger and stuff.
- Yea the windows have sunlight too, that keeps everything warmer in the winter.
- You use like less electricity because you don't need to turn the lights on when you walk in.
- **Well that's a big part of it too, but think what it's like here in the winter time and we're pretty far north, it gets dark early in the winter time. Jakob, what time does it get dark in like, December, January around here?**
- I think when its at its darkest, uh it would be I mean, you would have to have lights on your bikes and your cars when you leave school at 3:30
- **So you want those windows to capture as much light at that time, think about that. What else has it been like at home?**
- Weird
- **Why weird?**
- Well so, I was talking to Marissa about this, but I think I have a completely different experience about this than the entire group.
- **Why?**
- Because my partner has one bathroom and like, I don't know if this is normal, but she gets the water from the bathroom sink and not the kitchen sink.
- **For, to drink?**
- Yea.
- Oh yea, they do that.
- **Other people do that too?**
- Yea.
- No but like, they fill the pitcher.
- **Oh, for the dinner table?**
- For the entire dinner.
- **Do they have a kitchen sink?**
- Yea.
- But they use the bathroom.
- I mean that's not the biggest deal.

- Yea, it's weird to me.
- **It's different.**
- And then the doors really don't lock.
- Every door has a lock already in it.
- Yea, like a key.
- At my partner's house there's light switches outside. For the first two days, I just went to the bathroom like, I didn't know where the light switches were.
- **Haha, in the dark?**
- And then I was like, "Where's the light switch?" and she was like, "It's right outside." I gotta remember to turn it on and off as I'm entering.
- For the light switch I didn't realize there were two sides. I kept clicking in the center and holding it down for so long and didn't realize it's like on the side.
- Do any of you guys get along better with your parents than your actual partner?
- Yea.
- No, I get along better with his sibling.
- I have like, easier conversations when we're like, together as a family.
- The parents are so like, so smart and the dinner conversations are like political. I have to like, study. He asked me so many questions about things I didn't know about, so I had to look it up the next day it's so funny.
- **How many of you, speaking of that, have sit-down dinners each night with the families?**
- I've never eaten dinner with my family.
- **How many of you don't do that at home?**
- Once a week
- **Once a week or most of the time?**
- We do it as often as we can unless we're really busy.
- I literally never do it.
- **So has that been a really different experience for you Stephanie?**
- What?
- **Has that been a really different experience?**
- Yea it has. Like we sit at the dinner table for over an hour every night. It's weird, and sometimes the conversation like, doesn't continue and we sit there in silence and everyone stays there, and yea, it's just like, different.
- **So what's that like then, coming from a house where you're not eating dinner every night, or eating dinner as a family every night, now you're sitting down and having that experience?**
- I mean it's nice, I don't know, it's nice 'cause, what we talk about its not too serious. It's not like my parents talking to me about my grades. It's just like, nice light conversation. It's kinda relaxing.
- **That's a nice thing that its relaxing. What's the experience that the rest of you are having? I mean, aside from being quizzed on about politics.**
- They ask me about the war, and I don't know about the war.
- **Which one?**
- All of them!

- *Laughing*
- It's so hard, but they're so nice, and they're so smart and educated.
- I know, my partner's parents are like, the nicest people ever. I love her dad so much and I could talk to him forever. And I did. I talked to him for like, three and a half hours straight. Just the two of us. But every time we eat at dinner, she's in her room the whole time, so it's just me and her parents eating dinner.
- **Oh really?**
- She hasn't eaten dinner with us.
- **Have you asked her about that?**
- No, she doesn't talk much.
- I get that.
- It's different for me. The first breakfast day, I think it would be Saturday, yea Saturday, my partner was like, coaching so it was like me and her mom. We talked for like, two hours, just eating breakfast. But other than that I haven't really seen much of her family like, I don't think I've said more than five words to her brother or her dad really, because like, we're always at other people's houses. I mean, I'm having a good time, but I don't feel connected with anyone but her mom really.
- It's the opposite for me. I've spent so much time with her family that I've, I mean like, I've gone out, but like yesterday, her mom said that I wasn't allowed to go to the museum with you guys.
- **Oh really?**
- I was just at home sitting in my room, and I fell asleep. I asked, "Well can I go?" and she was like, "Well we have plans in like, two hours." I was like, "Ok."
- **That's hard.**
- But it was literally like two and a half hours later and I could have gone with you, but she didn't want me to. And like, my partner didn't like try to because she was sick yesterday. There was nothing I could do at home with her, and they invited me to go out to the museum, but her mom was like, "No, she's sick. So just stay at home with her."
- **That's hard. I don't know if that's just because she wasn't able to go?**
- I don't know.
- **What have you guys experienced in terms of, instead of like specific experiences at home unique to each of your specific homes, but what are some things that you've experienced here in Denmark in general, or here in school in general that have maybe been different, maybe have been enlightening maybe have been enjoyable, maybe have been different, maybe have been difficult? I don't know if you've come across anything.**
- Biking to school.
- Oh yea, I love biking to school.
- **Tell me about that.**
- Every morning it's like four kilometers, so it's not bad.
- Yea.
- We go past like farms and under tunnels, it's so pretty. I wish we could do that at home.

- **That sounds like, is that like a nice, do you guys talk on the way or are you just looking around?**
- Yea it's just quiet. It's like looking around and seeing everything. Yea it's really nice.
- **That's awesome. How's everybody else get to school? Anybody else bike?**
- I walk.
- I walk.
- I drive.
- **Well, you've got the chauffer!**
- We're going to start biking the last couple days.
- **You are? That's really nice.**
- Yea, her dad drives and then we walk home.
- **So is everybody pretty local?**
- Yea, we're like 25 minutes away so we drive every morning.
- **Bridget, you had something to say a second ago.**
- Their lessons are like 90, 95 minutes long and there's only four classes and I don't know how they stay the entire time. My partner says she just leaves because she gets bored and like, her family is completely fine with it. And the school just doesn't care.
- Yea, I heard like 15 % of the class could be absent and they don't care.
- We get in so much trouble.
- They call home.
- And if we try to leave, like the security guards are always standing there, like, "Where are you going?"
- And there's no nurse's office.
- Even if you leave the...
- Yea, we were talking to my partner and were like, "So what do you do if you have a headache?" He was like, "Go home," and I'm like "What do you mean? You can't just go to the nurse get some advil and go on with your day?" and he's like, "No, you go home."
- **Do they have a nurse?**
- No they don't.
- **No?**
- They're like, "Any time we feel sick, we just go home." Like you walk out and go home.
- Yea I'm like, "What happens if you like, throw up?" and he's like, "Go home." I'm like, "What happens if you like, you just have a headache?"
- You can't drive or something?
- Yea and he's like, "You just go home." I'm like, "What about something minor where you need just one advil?" and he's like, "Go home."
- **So they've got a lot more freedom here?**
- Yea, I like it.
- Yea my partner's parents are like, "Oh, you're home at 11 o'clock? That must have been fun!"
- **As opposed to, what would your parents be like?**
- If I got home at 11 my mom would be like, "You're out past the legal limit!"

- **Katie, you like it?**
- Yes I do, I feel more content when there's not camera's watching my every move, and teachers like yelling at us for going to the bathroom or anything.
- And even if you try to leave class to do a little work outside of class, you can't do that. Here, you can just go to the study room.
- Yea, the breaks are pretty cool too.
- It's almost like having eight periods, but it's just four split up.
- And you have the break in the middle.
- And you can actually eat in class.
- And the fresh food in the cafeteria where the chicken isn't purple
- I don't like the food.
- **Really?**
- I like the salad bar.
- West just has so much more options I like.
- Yea, but I don't get the chicken because I don't trust it.
- **Well let's go back to the whole thing with differences of freedoms because I heard someone over here say less stress here. Did you say that Blanca?**
- Yes.
- **Tell me about that.**
- Well just because like, if I forget that I didn't print out an essay, I have to worry about, what period am I going to print it out? What teacher is going to let me leave to print it out? What teacher's not going to be mad that I'm in the hallway? My English teacher's going to be mad that I didn't print it until the last minute. Here it's like, oh you didn't print something, you walk out, you find the printer, you print it out, and it's totally fine. it's just so much more relaxed here. There's not so many things to stress about.
- There's a lot more trust.
- Yea.
- **What do you mean?**
- They trust us to come back. I feel like if we were born with the trust they have, then we wouldn't take advantage of it. I feel like at this point where we are, people would abuse the trust, especially because there's so many of us. If we were born with it and we knew how to contain ourselves and restrict ourselves, and make sure we come back, then I feel like we'd all be a lot happier, like here.
- It's like a novelty to us, like how drinking is for them. Like you know how in America when we turn 21 we all binge drink? 'Cause it's not a novelty to us.
- **You mean it is a novelty**
- It is, yeah. So like when we get a privilege, we tend to abuse it because it's foreign to us. Well with them, they grew up with it, so they know how to...
- It's like every day of their life.
- Yea, so they know how to control it. They know how to, not abuse it.
- And the excitement's taken out of it because it's not a rule.
- So, do you think, I'm hearing a couple things here, and maybe because we're a couple days into this. The other groups kinda had different experiences. It seems like you're taking on, from what I'm hearing from you guys, very positive aspects like how

school is set up, maybe society. What do you think leads to having more freedom, or less restrictions on you at school, and at home? What is that? Why do we have that at home, and not here?

- I think they're more responsible than we are.
- They have less crime rates. You can just go anywhere and take the train.
- I mean I guess they're more responsible with their allergies because you can eat in every room. I guess Americans can't do that, or they have less allergies. Like that confuses me, like I don't understand why we can't eat in every single room, but they can eat in every single room. It doesn't really make sense. But it could just be that they're more responsible. They clean their whole café, but we have janitors that have to sweep the floors.
- **Could we have this at home?**
- I feel like it's too late to start something. You'd have to start with kindergarteners and work your way up because for us, people at our school would not follow the rules. I mean, we have rules, but if we lived like this they would take advantage of it because it's new and exciting. If we started out, it would just be like, oh it's a normal thing. Right now we're all excited because there's not 200 cameras watching us and reading our phones, and being tracked and stuff. I don't know, I don't feel like we could change, especially because there's so many of us. There's 400 of us, and there's probably 60 or 70 of them in their grade, maybe that's overestimating.
- **Yea, I mean each of our schools have about 1600 students, and here, there's like 400 kids total.**
- Yea we have the same amount as in like, just my grade alone. We have 420 something, and that's how many people we have in this school.
- Yeah, exactly, they have less people to take care of. But at the same time, they're all more responsible because they grew up with this freedom and trust, so they know not to abuse it, it's just respect. I was talking to my partner and she said, "Why do you guys all talk and look at your phones when the teacher's talking?" I was like, "I don't know, it's just something we do. We don't really think twice about it." And she's like, "Well that's kinda a lack of respect. We respect our teachers. We know when to listen and when to have fun." So they've found that balance in their life.
- It's also that their teachers give them freedom at the breaks and stuff. Whereas we get nothing. We have to sit for 50 minutes, and not, we can't look at our phones at all. It could just be us trying to like, we don't have that relaxing time. We have four minutes, then we have to do it again for 50 minutes.
- Yea, that's true.
- So they get breaks, and they have a lunch break, but we don't get that, so I kinda feel like, we look at our phones when the teacher's talking because I feel like we don't get that opportunity.
- So like a reward system? Yea, they kinda have a reward system set in place. So if you pay attention for these 45 minutes, then you'll have 10 minutes. Then you do it all over again, but you had that break, so you let off steam, and then you're back again. So you got all that out, so you're ready to focus again which is a really nice thing.
- **Do you think all of that is, this school in particular? Or have you seen anything outside the school, outside your specific families, but just, as you've been going to Copenhagen, does that seem reflective of them?**

- My partner's mom took me to like, a little town, and it was really cute. It had a bunch of shops, and a post office, and like, a flower store. We walked down, because she needed to pick up a package, and there were like, 10-year olds on their bikes, riding in. Then they stop and they were just, walking around the town. I was like, 10-year olds would not be able to walk around back at home. They were completely unsupervised, and there were even kids younger than 10 that were just walking around. I was like, that shows right there, that their freedom starts at such a young age.
- My partner's mom works at the elementary school right down there, which is a public school, so it's a little different than this, but like, the kids have so much freedom. There's barely a fence surrounding the school. The kids could obviously walk away without, like, you could walk right into the courtyard area with no problem whatsoever. There's no gates. It just seems like the kids have more freedom. I did see kids riding home on their bikes with their parents, but they were younger. Which kinda makes sense with the long distance. We just walked right into the school and met her mom. They didn't question anything, but yea the school day's over, but the school day was all there still, like, waiting for their parents, which was really interesting to me, because you, like, at my mom's school you gotta check in and stuff like that.
- They were saying like, I was talking to my partner's dad, and he was saying how it's different because we have school shootings. So we have such higher security.
- Yea, and their not even allowed to carry around pepper spray. The most they can carry around is hair spray.
- But I think a lot of people forget that the US is such a larger population. So the ratio might be the same, if you take into account, like kidnappings and such. It might be the same because the US is such a larger population.
- **Yea, there's an idea in psychology that the more you see something, the more likely you think it is to happen. So that's why people fear flying on planes, but not driving in cars. If there's a plane crash, you see it on the news for months and months, whereas a car crash, you might hear about it, you might not. So that could be it as well. There's certain things that, just the number of incidents at home might happen more, but maybe the percentages aren't that different. I don't know, I haven't looked at any crime stats to see, because you can look that up to see the percentages per 100,000 people of things happening.**
- I also find myself coming to the US's defense a lot.
- **That's really interesting. Why do you feel the need to do that?**
- I don't know, I guess it's because, like, I just find them saying stuff like, "Britain is the reason we're not occupied by Germany." And I'm like, "Oh, the US was there too." It's just weird that they like, kinda just bash the US when a lot of things, good and bad, like benefit Denmark.

*******Interview ended when a group of students came into the classroom that we used for the next period's class.**

Appendix I: Group 2 Interview

Monday, April 1, 2019

My comments and questions are in Bold.

- **Again, remember I've got the recorder going. The only two people who are going to get this recording are me and my advisor, so just lay down a couple ground rules for this.**
- No cursing.
- **I want this to be open. Now don't take advantage of that. We don't need to say every single curse word.**
- Your advisor is going to be like, "What is this?"
- Where are you going?
- **West Chester. Now the other thing with this, or a couple other things, ground-rules: number one, if we can try and stick to one person talking at a time. Like I'm not trying to make you guys raise your hands. I'm not gonna like, it's not like a classroom, this is a discussion. Everybody is equal part of it, so if there's things you want to talk about, you know. I'll ask a couple of questions to get things going, and I'll interject here and there, but the key is that one person is talking. Just because I want everybody to have the chance to get stuff out. And I don't want side conversations and whatnot going on. I want you guys to be honest. Again don't tell me things I want to hear. Tell me things that you're honestly feeling. I mean I'm sure there's a lot of really great things you've encountered. I'm sure there's things that are weird and can be confusing. Probably things you don't necessarily like so we're here to talk about it. If anything comes up I'll interject, probably some questions from here and there to know more about anything. This kind of gives us a chance to really think about what the experience has been so far. So with that said I'm talking way too much now. Let's start off, tell me about the weekend.**
- Exhausting.
- It was a lot of fun. Though we did a lot of stuff. Like least the people we were with Saturday we went in Copenhagen, and we did a canal tour around, and it's funny because like you know how overtourism overhyped The Little Mermaid is, so we passed by. there's this huge group of people there and they're all so focused on the statue, and the statue's like, it's so small. And they were like freaking out. It's the real size of The Little Mermaid so like, that was just really funny.
- She doesn't have red hair either. It was weird.
- Yeah it looked bigger in my imagination.
- It was a statue.
- I expected it to be smaller actually.
- **See, your expectations were really low for it.**
- Flounder wasn't there either.
- Yeah like where the heck's the crab?
- It's a statue of The Little Mermaid, so I was expecting it to be the size of a person.
- Part of it was. So on Saturday, at least for me and Michelle, we were together. Well we got food so we were... well back in America I think we knew a lot more of our area where we

were more than they did, so like when we went to like me and Amanda for example were starving. Like they knew we were hungry.

- Yeah like getting hangry.
- Yeah we're a little bit hangry and they were hungry too. Like they were just trying to find this food, but they didn't really know kind of like, what's going on with the food vendor part and we were just like, "I will get anything. We don't even really have to go."
- A lot of it though is, I notice a lot of it so like, I was with Michelle and we were following with her Dane and like, honestly she made it seem like she knew where she was going but she clearly had no idea.
- Oh yeah, she had no idea to be fair it was opening day.
- So it was, a lot of it is the journey, not the destination. Like there, like I know when we go places, when we were in Philly it was very much like we're going to go here and like no exceptions just use Google Maps. They're like let's take the side street and all of a sudden...
- Yeah like we should have planned better. Like, we knew we want to go to Copenhagen. We knew we want to go to Sweden, but all of us were like, free for all 'cause like, we should have scheduled everything better than we did.
- In Philly, back in America, we asked them what they wanted to do. They didn't really ask us what we wanted. Well they kind of asked us, but they didn't. We kind of also plan stuff because we know the area and they kind of know Copenhagen. So like, they should've been like, "Let's go here. Let's do this first. We're going to spend some time here. Then we're going to spend some time there."
- **What do you think, I think he said something really interesting, Luke, towards the journey not the destination?**
- I like that more.
- Yeah.
- I hated it, sometimes.
- **You did?**
- When I was hungry, I did not enjoy it.
- Yeah when you're hungry, no.
- **Well, obviously when you need food, you need food.**
- No when I'm hungry, yeah.
- Yeah other than walking excessively.
- We should just go in a circle.
- **I mean, talk. If someone else is talking, just give them a chance to talk.**
- I think we started getting hungry around 1:00 and we were like, "Ok, we're gonna go get lunch?" and then they'd say, "Ok, we're going to lunch." Then we take three hours and yeah, we're waiting, and we're going on so many different buses. We were like, "Are we still going to lunch?" And they were like, "Yeah of course we're still going to lunch."
- We could have just gone to Burger King.
- We went to three different parts of the city.
- I'm going to take two buses.
- Two buses and the Metro.
- Right, we would have rather just like, gone to a cafe where right, where we were and would have been done.

- But I feel like that takes away from the experience, though, Like the places where I lived are really cool we went to the you know how they have like, the food cart areas or whatever. So it was opening weekend.
- **Was it like the containers?**
- By like the skate park?
- **Yeah we went to that yesterday.**
- I got yelled at by...
- Yo, that Swedish girl that butt in front of me, I was ready to fight her.
- I thoroughly enjoyed getting yelled at by a Swede.
- **Hold on what happened? Well you're learning to be a Dane then if you hate Swedes.**
- She butted in front of me when I was already in line.
- I got out of line to go see the menu, which I don't really eat meat, to see if there's something that I could eat because we all went in this one line and we were like, "Ok we're gonna go here end of discussion."
- Yet she had the nerve to say we weren't waiting in line.
- We stepped out of line for 30 seconds but Bari and her partner were still in line in front of them, and me and Luke walked back and we've been standing there for 10 minutes and all of a sudden this girl goes you need to go get to the back of the line, and Luke went off. He was like, "We were standing here."
- It wasn't bad. It wasn't like rude.
- It wasn't rude. He didn't like, curse her out but he was like...
- I was not happy because like, she ...
- She was like, "We're hungry," and I was like, "We're not?"
- We were obviously all together because we were all talking to each other and they were just off to the side a little.
- And then she was being disrespectful to me. Like don't be disrespectful to me.
- And then she butted in front of Bari's partner after that.
- And then he goes, "Oh, now you're the one butting." I was like, "Thank you."
- **So this wasn't you know, do you think it was her being her, or was it like, coming from a different country?**
- It was just her being a bitch.
- Well it's funny because after I said that to my partner, he was like, "Yeah the Danes, we hate the Swedes."
- **Alright, so have you guys picked up on any of that rivalry between Denmark and Sweden?**
- Yeah.
- I've heard more about it.
- So we went to Malmö yesterday. I know a couple of us did.
- Do you call it Malmu?
- That's like the slash in the "O" or whatever.
- So I told my partner I liked Copenhagen better. She was like, "Yeah me too I don't know why you're saying that but like," they you know what I don't know what happened to where I was going with it...
- Yeah my partner is like, yesterday when we were in Sweden, she asked while her dad was driving us just 'cause it was kinda cool though 'cause we're driving across the famous bridge

here. Kind of like our own little tour guide. I guess I'm just pointing out all these differences, like the signs on if you saw the traffic signs they changed the color according to the colors of the flag, so like in Sweden, it was blue and yellow. And here it's red and white, so it's not pointing out differences like that but so many times then she asked me if I like Denmark better than Sweden. I think she was, she wasn't trying to put her bias out there but it was definitely there, and I was like, "I don't know. I feel like I need to see a greater portion of Sweden to have that." And at one point, she asked me if I think I would prefer to have a Swedish partner and done it over there and I was like "No, I'm good with this."

- I felt bad saying this while she was in here but the problem with the journey rather than the destination like this thing trying to compare Sweden to Copenhagen, it's kind of hard because when we were in Philly we made sure to be like, here's the Philly museum. Here's the Magical Gardens and here's the Liberty Bell, but when we're here we only spend probably like five minutes compared to the two hours of traveling to see things like where the New Harbor, they kind of got bored of it really quickly. When we were in Philly, we were really patient letting them see things.
- We were like so amazed and taking pictures.
- And then like, they were like, "Ok we're getting on the boat now." And so we left new harbor really fast and that was the one thing I wanted to see and then right when we got back, they wanted to leave so like, I was like, I haven't, I think that was the only thing I've seen of Copenhagen because we haven't spent time to really like look around we just kind of like, they're not very organized. Like we were so especially with Sweden we just saw the triangle then we went off to the mall and then it was like...
- Yeah. I didn't want to go to the mall. We did the same thing.
- Yeah if we wanted to go shopping, I wouldn't have.
- So like, I only saw the triangle and that was it.
- I just saw the mall, that was it.
- This kind of changes the discussion, but also they're kind of hypocritical.
- **In what way?**
- When we were like, there in the US like, we would, when we are in the US if they want to leave somewhere, or like they were ready to go, we always accommodated them and like, obviously a lot of them are super nice, but a couple of them if like, I noticed yesterday with Emilia and her partner, Emilia wanted, and I'm not blaming anything on anyone but Emilia did want to leave and her partner did want to stay with her group. I know she had to figure it out and I'm not blaming her, I don't know all sides of the story, but like, I just know that if I wanted to leave I would have gone, you know what I mean?
- It's like different ways of dealing with them.
- It's also like, it should be what do you want? Let's do what you want.
- Yeah
- **So what, and I'll let you continue in a second Megan, but what it kind of sounds like there was, I'm hearing a lot of "This is what we did when we were in the US." It seems like a lot of the plans were set out there was you know, we want to see this we want to go to that, you know? We'll make a plan to go see this specific thing, but it seems like here you're experiencing it a little differently and that it's like there's an idea of where we're going, but there's not like specific sites, and we're just going to see that. So let's think about that for a second. So what are some positives to that? Obviously we're hearing some negatives, but what are some positives that can come from that approach versus...**

- Not as worried about time.
- Yeah.
- **What do you mean?**
- And I've been surprised buy things that we see.
- **So let's let Luke go on that. And Bari I do want to hear from you then, I know you have something to say Liz.**
- Alright I know like someone said that it takes like, we'll go for two hours and then there we're there for five minutes. And personally, I don't really care about the touristy stuff. I don't want to see it. Look I'd rather walk around. I like to kind of live it more so I personally kind of like that approach more 'cause I'm getting to see like, cool things like, I know like yesterday with, or was it Saturday, like we just I mean, it took us two hours. We took public transportation, ended up in some weird areas in town, ended up in some cool areas, like I like getting to see more of the...
- **So did you stumble across things that you really liked?**
- There's this thing that like, my mom called like a protest, but it was like an extremist protest. So these people were dressed in skeletons, and like, the only word that the Danes could make out was something about nuclearization.
- Ooh my partner saw the back of the shirt: NATO Nuclear Against
- Accused Traitor.
- No, it was terrorists.
- Yeah.
- It was something called NATO terrorists.
- They're basically going against NATO.
- Their way of doing it you know, in these Skelton outfits, and then they, the gay people flags that they were waving around
- **The rainbow flags?**
- Yeah the rainbow, yeah you know what I mean.
- Apologize.
- Oh I'm sorry rich white girl.
- *laughter *
- Like, I'm not being disrespectful.
- **No, I know you're not.**
- I'm a very accepting person. So that your professor knows.
- **Pretend the recorder is not here.**
- And then the homeless people.
- Oh my God that was so funny. The homeless people, like it was kind of like, the really awful ones in Philly. They have issues with addiction and mental illness, so they got really mad.
- The one person was like, we're going to die anyway so why do you even care?
- Yeah like, and they started throwing stuff and yelling.
- It was really funny.
- A couple of them were getting a little touchy.
- Yeah people were like touching me and Emilia.
- Yes, I pushed Megan and Emilia in because I was like you all don't want to touch me because I'm not what you want.

- He like, so he was like he like grabbed me?
- **So this is the protest?**
- Yeah like, the homeless people.
- Yeah, didn't he like get behind you?
- He got behind Emilia, and he was like this. And then he like, stroked my back like that and Luke was like, "Ok guys." Thank you, Luke.
- It was me and Megan and luckily I wasn't on the outside like Luke had to...
- We are waiting at a bus stop when this happened and trying to get on a bus.
- But it was really weird and also really interesting.
- It was weird to see that part.
- **And that's also something that a lot of you guys, well obviously like random people touching you, like that whole experience of you know, I think a lot of our students at the two high schools aren't necessarily going into the city very much.**
- Yeah we're pretty sheltered
- Yeah.
- I'm not I've been everything.
- No.
- I think what was different was, we can't, I mean on the benches it was open beer cans everywhere.
- Yes.
- And like, more beers that haven't been opened. You can't have that.
- People were absolutely trashed in the train station.
- And you can't be publicly drunk at noon in Philly.
- Some of us watched the girl almost get hit by a train.
- Yeah she was throwing up bread because she couldn't do anything.
- I think it was, where in Sweden yesterday, there was like drunk people at like 8:00 AM.
- This was in Copenhagen at night though.
- That's just out of the norm for us, let's just not like.
- Well, you go out in public drunk, you're booked.
- Exactly. Like you can't do that, so it was weird for us to be surrounded by a group of people that was like a normal afternoon.
- Like even as adults, you go out and it's public intoxication. But like, there was, leaving Copenhagen that night, we left around 7:30-ish, it was insane to see the amount of people like tumbling over this one girl just got hit by a train.
- Like she fell into it. It was gross.
- **But in all fairness, I mean, how often are you in Philly on a Saturday night?**
- Not often.
- Not often. That's scary. That is scary.
- But I go to Philly more often, but I'm still with my family.
- But we don't go to Philly because our parents like, it's too dangerous. You're not staying in a train station.
- They have a lot of freedom here.
- Yeah they do.

- I saw a little baby like, a little child, like probably in 2nd grade riding a bike to school by himself.
- Which is unheard of. Like, your parents have to meet you at the bus stop in elementary school. It's unheard of to not be with an adult at all times.
- There's some things that also like, when we were there, when we were in Philly, like even if we didn't want to do it we acted like we wanted to do it. And they're kind of not so like, we're at the bus stop you could see it they were bored or tired or whatever.
- We get left behind a lot.
- Yeah
- You can tell when they get annoyed by us.
- I'd rather know how you're feeling then you fake it.
- Emilia made a very good point, she said "Sometimes they kind of dismissed some of the things that we say."
- And they like, we just got taken on a boat ride. We don't really know, they're kind of just like, "Ok, we're getting the boat ride." But that was cool I'm not going to lie, like I liked it.
- It's cool how it happens but like, yesterday in Sweden they just started walking in stores and so we did get split like, I was staying with other people because my partner just like, well it wasn't a bad thing. I wasn't upset about it, I just let him stay with the guys. And I stay with the girls doing in the stores, but it's just kind of weird that like they just kind of move on without us and they don't really tell us like, when we were in Philly we would say like, "Ok I'm going to go here. Make sure you're with these people."
- Do you guys want to go to any of these places?
- **hold on let me get Liz and then Amy, and then I have a question that I want to ask you guys.**
- Well, Caitlin and I had a nice day in Sweden because we were with our partners, other exchange people, so we have a giant group of travelers that we're trying to move around with. But Sweden was, we loved it. It was really nice. It was all foot traffic and some of it was all cobblestone streets.
- Completely different than what you're used to.
- The buildings were really pretty.
- And it wasn't trashed or anything either.
- And there is no trash. People are really nice everyone is dressed nice we just loved it. And they had asked, "What do you want to do?" and they know I love castles. I love history, so they took us to a castle and we spent like, an hour and a half, like two hours in there.
- **So we're getting a little bit of a difference. Like maybe instead of looking at it as, "they're doing this, they're doing this..."**
- They're gonna do what they wanna do.
- **Well, but we also have to remember, we're dealing with very different personalities I'm sure that if we talk to the Danish students about our group...**
- They'd have word on us.
- Well my partner likes me, I'm fine.
- **There might be, but we also need to think about it in a way. Are we dealing with a population of people or are we dealing with specific people? Because it seems like what you're talking about and what Liz's talking about are two different things there.**

- They're still kind of like, oh let's go shopping. We were like, sitting in the store at one point. We were like, we don't want to shop we didn't come to Sweden to shop.
- **So you did have loads of experience with that, but it seems like most of your experience so far has been a little bit more enlightening, well enlightening is not the right word, but accommodating. So let me hear from Amy, and then I want to pose a question to you guys.**
- Ok, well you just said specific so it's like there's no kind of point in saying this anymore but you kind of piggyback on what Bari said about how they kind of just do what they want and they just leave and like, I don't mean to expose, but like I don't want get anyone in trouble, but my partner did leave like, completely all day, and like my card wasn't working which is my fault because I didn't tell my bank I was going to Sweden, so I couldn't pay for lunch and another Dane had to pay for me. She left with like, her best friend and they didn't tell me anything.
- **So you're home or are you in Copenhagen?**
- They were in Sweden.
- **Ok, but you were with people?**
- I was with people but like, she just completely left and I didn't know anything.
- **So that's really hard.**
- Yeah and we went to the mall too. And she did the same thing.
- Well you don't have to find your way around on your own too.
- Because she luckily had people
- **Ok you had people.**
- Yeah, yeah. I was with them, so that was a plus. I thought it was very not cool that she didn't say anything. Just like left I heard from another Dane that they left.
- **Yeah that's really hard. Now did you address this with her when you got home? Or when you met up with her again?**
- No, that probably would've been smart.
- **Would you want to? I mean would you feel comfortable doing so**
- Oh yeah, well not now.
- **Why not?**
- I just feel like it's over, like it's not even worth it at this point.
- **Why not? I mean if you feel that way, but if it bothers you I mean, it's something you can address.**
- I feel like a lot of them do that though. Like someone in our group will stop to take a picture because it looks so pretty and they keep booking it. Like they never stop for anything. If it's not something you want to stop for.
- This is something really quick like, kind of going off something that you said like me and my partner like, being specific for my partner like, me and her didn't necessarily want to shop she was just kind of doing with the rest of the group wanted to do so it's kind of like,
- **Caught in the middle?**
- Yeah like I was like, I didn't really want to like, I know like me and Denise, we didn't really want to shop I knew that Amanda really wanted to shop so like, we all kind of did it but we all just kind of made the decision for one person. So it's not necessarily like my Dane's fault. She was just like, "I don't know what else to do. I'm sorry." and I was like, "It's ok" because we don't want to be alone because it's scary.

- **Ok Michelle go real quick and then after Michelle talks let me ask my question.**
- I mean I understand that. I understand that too. Yesterday we were at the mall originally, like my partner had told me, like before when we went over here like, she had rarely been in Sweden, so she didn't know as much. So we kind of went to the mall but like, throughout this entire trip there are times when I'm in a different part of the group she'll like look back constantly to make sure I'm either like still behind her and she'll constantly check in with me to make sure.
- My partner checks on me too.
- **All right. So again, we're getting some individual personalities. Let's think about this in another way.**
- Is this your question?
- **No, I'm gonna say one thing. I'm going to get to my question so again, let's think about this in terms of individual personalities as opposed to just generalizations, because I think like that's really hard especially when we try and characterize a different group of people because that's the point I'm trying to make with that because if we were to ask them about their experience in the US I'm sure there might be some expectations that they may have had that were a little different and we don't want like, you know, think how just the nine of you sitting here right now, how different each of you are in your personality. Is that depending on who you're here with now? It's certain things. Obviously being left is definitely different, but there's different things like, they don't have a plan or anything like that. But I think one of the things that you have to consider, and I had talked about a lot when we were starting this program, it seems like we need to look at our perceptions of Denmark, our perception United States perception of ourselves and looking at how different things are done and one of the things I think two things that can help, and this is from Jens, and Pia feel free to enlighten,**
- Who's Jens?
- **Oh you haven't met Jens yet. He's one of the other teachers that does the program with me. He and Jakob switch off every year. Pia, I hope you help me with this, I think one of things with Danes that's very important versus Americans is that as Americans we're very, we want to put forth the best facade even if it's not the real image you know.**
- Yeah.
- Yeah that's true.
- We're fake.
- **Versus well, it's not fake its...**
- We want to like look our best.
- **It's a different...**
- We're very involved with reputation
- **Well yeah, and it's a difference of like people in Denmark are little bit more you know open, carefree, open to expressing how they feel but the same time they don't get offended the way that we do.**
- I don't know. On the train ride, even though we're in a public place, they're being very political like asking, "Oh what do you think about abortion. What do you think about politics? What do you think about like, religion? And like immigration? And your country?" And we were like, "In our country, it's impossible having opinion because it's such a large

population, everybody has their own opinion and everyone is afraid to say their opinion and it's usually a friend if you don't have the same opinion." So they were like yeah our population is so much smaller. It's almost impossible to change something in our country that someone being upset about it.

- My partner's mom said the exact same thing last night to me.
- **What did she say?**
- Her mom's American.
- Yeah her mom is from America. She hasn't lived there since she was 19. She she's been here since like, forever. I've never talked about prior to it but we were just like, oh we were just talking about politics and how they have a multiparty system compared to our one-party system where you pretty much have two groups. Are we a two-party system?
- **Democratic and Republican.**
- Oh yeah but they have so many different groups, but it's so much easier for that to work for us because we're so small. But if you were to take our multiparty system to America, it would never really work just because you can't have the same opinions as everyone else. I can't even classify myself as Republican because I like these views so it's split ticket nowadays and she's like yeah it was just like, weird.
- **Yes, it's just some politics. Amy,**
- I've few points to make. I do agree that if you say you're Republican, well I mean it's both sides depends on how you look looking at it. It's completely looked down upon if you're like Oh I'm a Republican, it's like oh country Trump racist. Like it's just...
- It's why the danes are looking down just saying that.
- And if you say well, "I do like Trump" they would be so like, ew.
- They're kind of taken aback by it.
- That's my point. Another contradiction is I think like, it's the same. I don't know what I'm saying, but like different people, I don't know how to word it, but not everyone is like that. But going back to how you're saying they never get offended or whatever. I don't mean, I'm not saying I'm superior or whatever, I don't get very offended very much and like I'm super honest so I feel like it's...
- **So you feel you don't get super offended. You're super honest? Maybe that difference between Danes and Americans doesn't bother you as much, or you don't notice it as much as that?**
- Oh I notice it.
- **You do notice it?**
- I think Americans can be very soft and get hurt very easily.
- Ok Luke,
- I'd like to pick back at both things like she said, like I personally like the cold approach and again like I especially my personal life out of school being raised by my mom and my dad. And both my mom and my dad were very like, I mean they're very laid back parents but they have no problem saying certain things.
- My family's so sarcastic.
- Yes so sarcastic. So if my mom was like, if she thinks I'm being an asshole, she will let me know, and I like that because I don't need to like, I don't feel the need to like, like again, I'd rather you put it bluntly than sugarcoat it. Also I know that, going off what she said about politics, like my family is very political, but we're still taught like, I'm very political oriented.

I'm going to college for politics and like, I was still taught like, you don't talk about that. And like my mom has like, you don't bring up politics in a public setting, you just don't.

- Unless you're looking for an argument.
- Yeah, unless you're looking for a fight and like,
- **So do you feel, do you guys feel very uncomfortable then if politics are brought up?**
- Yes.
- It depends.
- No, I'm ready to go.
- **But I'm talking about here.**
- My Dane hasn't even brought it up.
- I think they were told if politics and religion come up, I think they were warned, shut it down right away. Because I think it makes them uncomfortable too and just because we're coming from two different views like, living there you get a completely separate thing than what the media might portray to them here. And I think that could really cause a barrier in between it and I don't think they want that to come in between.
- There's three things ought not to bring up religion politics and sex and those are the three things you don't bring up
- But I think like you can also like least from we had the same type of conversation last night at dinner like, I feel like I tried to give them like a holistic point of view rather than just that this way, this way, this way.
- Yeah but like, our understanding like when you talk to them a certain way it's just that I've experienced, we're like just the people I'm around I don't talk politics because I'm not like into it like Luke is. I don't know as much as I should, and religion I don't really discuss either because it's not something that I follow religiously so like, anytime it's come up I don't really mind. So I don't really involve myself when I'm hearing it come up between other people. It's just like, the other people around are like, "Oh we're not supposed to talk about that." It just gets shut down right away and then the conversation changes too quickly to notice anything.
- Amy, then I have something else to say.
- It is very like, it's not fair. If you, I feel like, like I don't want to make any assumptions, but if you're a Democrat that you can talk about it as much as you want. But if you're not, then I don't know.
- I think we're getting off subject.
- **But we're talking about the context of being here**
- No she's saying that if you don't follow some of things that they do the second you bring it up it's like no don't talk about that.
- It came up that my boyfriend is Republican and then Cathleen's partner, because I guess he knows him 'cause they had like a bonfire with him or something back in America, they like said that he was my boyfriend and he was like, "Oh really?" and he like made that face.
- **Well how's that make you feel?**
- I was like, "Oh. Like sorry."
- Because it was politics.
- Yeah immediately I was like, I don't have all the same views as him, like I felt like...
- **Well why did you feel the need that you have to justify that? Like why couldn't you, could you have a conversation about it because you and your boyfriend obviously...**
- We make it work.

- Yeah you make it work, so could you can you have that conversation with.
- I don't think they're as understanding because Trump at home has such a negative context like in this world like last night dinner they brought up Trump and they were like, "Well you might like Congress, but you might hate Trump" but it's always like hate Trump, hate Trump hate Trump. But if you're like, "Oh my boyfriend likes Ttrump," they're like, "I don't have the exact same views," but at the same time I feel like I'm going to get judged because they have this...
- What they don't understand is that you can have this like, personally I don't really care. So my family were independents, like we agree with both sides. And I think what they're trying to say they don't get how you can have ideas from both sides.
- And that you can respect other people.
- And you can respect other people with different viewpoints.
- **Well let me ask you a question. Do you think you had enough political conversations with your partners, your partners' families you can make a judgment that?**
- I haven't had any.
- I haven't had a single one.
- I haven't had any.
- I'm too scared.
- I've had a couple but they were brief .
- **Hold on, hold on I think this is when there's things that we need to think about though. And going forward for the rest of the week we've been here for four days now, three days, yeah three-ish days. We need to think about making those sweeping judgments. So we have these impressions of what we've seen from our partners and the people we've interacted with and rather than go, "they, they, they," because think of if we reverse this. Think about what you guys are complaining about that you're being told by someone about how your political beliefs should be based on their values, and now we're saying, "Well their political beliefs are this, but we're basing it on our values." Do you guys see that? and that's why there's key things about this whole experience, is that we come into this experience with our background our understanding as where we're from, who we are what our families are, that's our frame of reference. That's the lens with which we see the world, and so when someone else is acting in a different way we equate how they're acting based on that. But we, well not where they're from ,but what we know to be, how people in our lives act how we've been told to act, but we need, but my challenge for the rest of the time we're here it is to try and break free of that, "this is what I'm used to I'm used to being told we don't talk about politics." Well your partners may not be told that.**
- Well a few of them said to us, don't talk to us about politics.
- They are not allowed to.
- We were approached for politics.
- And I'm not just talking about politics. I'm just using that as an example right now but,
- What's your question?
- I'm getting to it Megan, I'm getting to the point.
- I'm on edge I want to know.
- You're antsy.
- You are antsy.

- **It's not necessarily a question, more of a statement. Think about this. Instead of looking at things from the perspective of what you've been told. How you've grown up, look at things from the perspective of they've been told something different, you know your partners have grown up in a different home the culture in Denmark. Even though there's a lot of similarities it's very different. So is that a bad thing? or is that just a different thing?**
- Different.
- It's different.
- Yeah does it work for partners? I mean let's take a step back. We spend a lot on this, so we don't have too much more time and I do want to hear from Tim and Caitlin because Tim's been oddly silent.
- I feel like it's harder for him because he's had to switch to a completely new partner so he's still in that honeymoon phase.
- So he's got a completely different experience.
- I mean I haven't seen Tim at all this is the first time I've seen Tim since we've been here.
- Yeah where have you been bro?
- Just around. My experience has been completely different. Like the whole planning thing yeah, we didn't plan anything at all Saturday morning. We woke up. She's like, "Yeah we're going to go to Copenhagen." I was like, "Oh any plans?" and she was like, "Nah." On the train right there I was like, "Do you know where anyone else is?" because we were meeting up with the French exchange students too and she was like, "Nah I only know where they are right now so we will just met up at some place" and it's like, "Oh so what's the plan?" and no one knows what we're going to do. And then we went and we saw the Little Mermaid and we just walked around, but everyone, it wasn't like everyone was like, "Alright, let's go," it was like, just take your time, and just enjoy what you see. And I thought it was really cool how lightly the effort is taken here, because I feel like bitches was just like the mother fucking musical. I just see there's Erotic World posters everywhere.
- Yeah right in Nyhavn, there's pictures of like...
- There's a gentlemen's club.
- Yeah I thought it was a Chinese restaurant.
- **And in all fairness guys again, you clearly have not spent a lot of time in cities because if you walk around...**
- If you walk down the streets of Philly.
- Yeah.
- Yeah like we're so sheltered in America. Like my partner's mom was like, "Oh yeah, you know your curfew is like 2:00 AM on Saturday." And I was like, "my curfew is 11."
- My guy was like, "You don't have a curfew." And I was like, "Hell yeah! It's 1:00 AM I'm just getting started!"
- **This gets back to a whole different thing that's coming from the beginning. And I think if we circle this around then.**
- Let's just keep going.
- **We can. Let's go for another 10 minutes.**
- Well you're not gonna have time for any other group.
- **Yeah but we need to see what's going on with the trains and whatnot.**
- I enjoy this.

- **I know I enjoy this too we'll do this again. I would like to do this again this week.**
- We should get coffee over this.
- We should get coffee.
- We could do like, a podcast.
- We should have a podcast.
- **I was wondering what would happen if you challenge just the assumptions about for example the Republican Party. Just play devil's advocate with some of the Danes say what they're saying and what they're doing is good because of such and such. And you know because they will they they're happy to talk about it even unless they've been told specifically not to see like just try and challenge their assumptions and see what happens.**
- I don't know if I really want to.
- I don't know if I know enough.
- Have you ever seen those videos that they bring up on youtube. It's like, "Oh you say one thing" and you're like this is this a Republican Or Democrat and they're like this is a Democrat and you're like no this is a Republican I think it's really funny.
- Like the change my mind kinda thing?
- **But here's the thing too. You know if you don't know enough about it, and you're not comfortable enough, yeah you don't have to do it. But you know something, yeah had that conversation challenge them because again, it's different side it's enlightning for them but the thing I want to go back to is at the very beginning of this whole session, so something to go back to the beginning, you're talking about the scheduling of time and things like that I didn't hear this this year but last year and the year before one of the things that came from the Danish students was they felt very babied by their American partners when they were in the US.**
- I could totally agree that they were saying that.
- Fact.
- I believe that.
- They would definitely say that I would say baby then
- **And I think like, sometimes like in the US we over-schedule ourselves. Like think about the worlds that you know my generation as well, but that you guys especially grew up in. I mean very rarely did any of us have very unstructured time. It was, we've got practice. We've got lessons. We've got rehearsals. We've got this. We've got that.**
- Are you talking you or us?
- Everyone.
- It's just what we're used to.
- **I think just in general, but individually it might be different in your homes. Well I think in general that's what we have when we come over here and then I hear this every year from the our students: you know we have all this stuff planned but we get over here we just hang out at night and we just had dinner. So what do you see at that difference of two cultures?**
- I think that's the cultural barrier that we've run into. I think that's where a lot of the frustrations are coming from whenever we talk and even though it is frustrating when I'm in it, when I go to talk here I'm just, like this one, I'm going to say what's frustrating me because obviously I'm not just going to be rude to the family and be like 'Cause like I don't have a

reason to be rude I'm having fun here. And like, even though the frustrating part that they're not scheduled like us they're not you know on time like, well they're pretty much on time but they're not worrying about being on a time schedule and our views aren't butting heads and even though it's frustrating it's my favorite part of the trip.

- **What specific is your favorite part?**
- The frustrating part. Like running it into and butting heads with how we are and how they are because it's teaching me, no it's like teaching me so much about what it's like for them and what it's like for me because being here and living, I think it's so much different than coming here and staying in a hotel and continuously living my American life, just in Denmark. It's kind of showing me this is how Danes live.
- And also, they're not on a time schedule like they're in no rush at all.
- Not gonna lie I don't like that.
- I like having a set schedule.
- **Hold on one second let Bari finish her point.**
- I'm saying even though I come here and I do sound frustrated like I'm not having a great time I'm having an amazing time. I'm having an amazing time.
- Me and Bari texting this morning.
- It was, it was like I hate this but I love it! Like let's go to school!
- So you're saying basically you feel you're getting a chance to live a life of a Dane. even Though it's not the life you would have chosen if you came over here on vacation with your family you're getting to live that life as a Dane?
- Like I don't yeah and even though we've sat here and we've said things about our partners like, walk away without us, it's kind of like at the same time I'm enjoying it because I'm going to go home and tell my mom, "Now I know what the Danes life is like." And throughout the days it's going to become more understanding with like how they felt in America and just like...
- Sometimes I don't think they have anything in their heads.
- That's awful.
- Megan we're going with they versus your partners.
- No I'm saying that they're very relaxed like like they're just like everything you do is calm.
- They don't have any worries in their mind. You should have phrased it like that.
- **Maybe there's something to that, unscheduledness, you know maybe there's some connections there.**
- My partner is telling me he's telling me, "I haven't been stressed in like 5 months." And I was like, "That would be really nice."
- That's what I'm saying! Like for me, like my anxiety is like crazier than everybody else's in this world!
- Megan! What?!
- My anxiety is bad.
- She said my anxiety is worse than anybody else is in this world.
- It's an exaggeration.
- Have you gotten that Megan's dramatic?
- Liz you were making a point earlier.
- Yeah it's really laid back. Like this morning we're supposed to leave for the train station at 7:25 and my alarm went off at 6:00 but like, I turned it off, went back to sleep, and it was like

7:00. Then I got up and I was like, “Oh my God we gotta go!” And like, she was going to the bathroom, and she takes forever in the bathroom, and I was like, “Can I shower first?” I had to shower 'cause I'm not going outside without showering. She was like, “Yes.” So I'm like rushing and I came out and she's like sitting at her kitchen table on her phone and I'm like, “How are you not doing something?” And like, I go to get dressed and she like knocks on my door and she's like, “Hey! Trains are on strike. We don't have to be there for another hour.” And I was like, First off if you didn't know that in the past hour you should have woken me up. I like, she hasn't woken me up once. It's always been like I get up brush my teeth come out and wake her up. She hasn't woken me up once. I was like, “Wake me up if I'm like, if we have to leave in 25 minutes.”

- I feel weird sitting there eating breakfast and no one's moving. I'm like we have to leave in five minutes and they're just like still sitting there.
- **So we've got a key difference here that a lot of you are experiencing that you've got this over-stressed life like, “I've gotta go do this. I've got to do this.” We've always got something on our plate.**
- And you want to be like 10 minutes early.
- Yeah we've always got something on her mind. We've gotta be here and think about this.
- I've noticed that difference and I don't know if it's just me or what I'm used to but I don't like it.
- I don't like it either.
- **So hold on. Let's think about this. So it's uncomfortable for you?**
- It stresses me out more not having a set schedule than having a set schedule
- And it's probably because it's what we're used to.
- And even if you're stressed, you stress trying to make it on time.
- **Let me ask you a question. What since you've been here have you absolutely had to be at?**
- we had to be at the train station this morning and they...
- But they run every 10 minutes.
- **Ok, so one thing.**
- It's like catching trains catching buses.
- **So if you miss the train you wait 10 minutes.**
- But then it like messes your schedule for the next one.
- But they also don't tell you that.
- But me and Kerry, we missed the train yesterday it wasn't a big deal.
- Same, we missed our train too.
- But then you've gotta wait for another 10 minutes.
- Yeah but then you talk, you scroll through your Phone, like you would normally do anyway.
- It also cost me \$17.00 for 2 drinks so...
- Yeah that was insane.
- **All of you guys have been stressed about getting somewhere. Being on a schedule.**
- Not me.
- **Ok, a lot of you have been stressed. Stop, let me talk.**
- I'm scared.
- **Why? I just want to make my point that I'll let you talk. You've been on the edge of your seat Megan.**

- Alright, go Mapes.
- **Think about this. You've all been stressed about something. Getting somewhere most of you, except Luke, have been stressed about getting somewhere, having a schedule but then ask yourself that question what are you going to?**
- Food.
- Sweden.
- Hungry.
- **Ok, food is different. You're hungry. That's your body talking, but it's not like you had to get to Sweden at 7:00 o'clock or Sweden closed.**
- So a whole thing was that we have videos of us running everywhere because apparently they didn't wait for us for a lot of things. Other things we thought like, we're missing our train so it's like they still kind of have that we have to be here or somewhere but it's not to an extent.
- So it's not the same extent.
- For us to America it's like if we don't get it we're screwed we're done. We're gonna die, but for them it's like we're going to try and make it this one. If we don't, we're going to get the next one they always have positive. They're optimistic versus we're not.
- I love that.
- Ok, but so am I.
- **Megan that's a really good point.**
- I think like for us feeling stressed and rushing is like when, before I go to sleep and when I wake up in the morning, I'm like, "What time do you think we're going to eat breakfast.? What time do we have to be at the train station?" They'll be like, "Ok, we're going to try and catch the 7:25 train" so I feel like I'm rushing and feeling uncomfortable because I don't want them to feel like I'm making them late. If I'm still sitting at the table with them and I still need to put on my shoes and jacket, so I feel like I'm rushed.
- **Again we feel the need to be overly polite.**
- I think we also like that like we like that, I swear we like to stress to have a sense of accomplishment.
- Oh yeah.
- And then we can be like, "Oh we're on time. Everything is great. We made the train or we're at school."
- Yeah. It's like the little accomplishments.
- We want that accomplishment of like we made it on time we succeeded we're done we're good.
- **But they don't need that?**
- My partner does. She's so on time. She's like we're going to leave here. We're gonna leave at this time. She's like, so much more American than that aspect. It's like, but it's like opposite of me. So in some ways she's the more American because I'm late to everything.
- So you're not stressed that's fine.
- Yeah look at the stress I'm feeling right now.
- You're being a little hypocritical right now.
- I didn't say I'm Danish, Luke!
- I didn't mean like, I didn't mean when I said they didn't have anything on their minds I meant that they're just not worrying.
- Megan, you apologized.

- **Yeah you clarified that. You did clarify that. And I think that's a really good point. Yeah and again guys, one of the things about being here is at no point did we ever portray, and I apologize, if Megan and Ellen and I did this, try to portray that there wasn't gonna be a stress here. Like, you are going to be uncomfortable. And that's the whole point of doing this. And I think Bari's point that she made about that she's living that Danish life, and it would be very different if you're in a hotel.**
- It is this is completely different when I was here over the summer this is like a complete 180 difference. And this is exactly the reason I wanted to do the exchange because you go and visit there because when I was here before, well when we're here for the summer we stayed in hotels so mine too was to the point that we had a full like, a full day scheduled. I think I might have done a quarter of the amount of I've done with my mom, but this is the Danish life it's a totally different experience and I love it.
- **That's awesome I think the mood has definitely shifted during the course of this conversation**
- Well that's why I said the frustrating things are my favorite.
- You like, bringing up frustrating things is making me frustrated though.
- Good
- Kerry, you're always frustrated.
- I can't stop moving I feel very antsy.
- You're always mad at somebody>
- But something is that what I have noticed though when I told Like specifically, like when my partner, like I'm like, "I'm hungry" like when I do tell her something she's like, "Yes, let's go get food." When I do tell her something though, sometimes especially with food she does switch on, "Ok, let's go to it now let's go to it now."
- **So there's a specific difference there. Like of maybe sometimes or some of us may be expecting intuition on the part of our partners and not necessarily directly expressing that because we want to be polite.**
- I think we're expecting them to be accommodating to us as we were to them.
- **We are expecting them to read our minds.**
- No I'm just, but like, but with us in America we were very like, we were very accommodating to them. I think we were expecting them to do the same to us and we are slowly realizing maybe they don't all do that as much.
- No, my partner does that to me.
- **But that might go back to that whole being very being a very scheduled society versus a society that is a little more easy going with things, is that in our minds it's like well it's 12:00 o'clock they probably want lunch because it's lunchtime it's scheduled versus just...**
- You could eat lunch at 5:00 o'clock and they would not care.
- **But think about that though so they could eat lunch at 5:00 o'clock and not care and dinner at 7.**
- Yeah they'll have like a bowl of soup that's what we did last night.
- **So again we're looking at things through our lens of we expect this schedule because that's what we have back home. But they're looking at things through a lens of lifestyles a little bit at a different pace right, and so maybe for them again when some of the Danish students in America feel they're being babied and being told what to do**

schedule by schedule, they're looking at it through a lens of, "Hey maybe we let things go a little bit more."

- They just don't care what they do, like you know I mean like in the morning, yesterday morning, my partner's dad just left and literally went on a 15 mile walk and just looked at scenery. He meant to go on a 10 mile hike and he was like what are 5 extra miles? I walked the wrong path, I don't care I have nothing to do. But if I had an extra 5 miles I would've been like hell no what am I doing I've got stuff to do.
- It's also that they don't seem to have as much homework.
- I was going to say I think that the punishments for us are kind of what makes us want to do things on time because I think like I don't know what it's like for them if they show up late to school one morning .
- They missed the whole day. You get marked absent for the whole class.
- I see, so if we showed up late to school it's like you only got 5 more before you have an in school suspension but if they get in trouble you only have to come in late just to do one extra assignment you know. I feel like the punishments aren't and my partner and I were talking about it, he was like, "You guys seem to have a strict punishment for anything." We were just talking about you know, being just at school, like in jail it's just like anything.
- **So again we have differences in expectations in our different societies alright close point and then I will say one more thing and then we should go.**
- Yeah I don't need to say it. I just wanted to repeat what Liz said about, I think we just like it's because of accomplishments like feeling accomplished.
- **So Amy, can you expand on that and Liz you can expand on it as well because I mean, I think that's a really that's a really good thing.**
- I just love set schedules.
- I like it because it's not a set schedule.
- We went out and hung out with a lot of people one night and we were kind of just like, we realized we were sitting on the train the next morning we're going to Sweden.
- No we were going to Copenhagen.
- And we were just like, we turned to them and we're like, "You guys really don't care what other people think about? You guys like, we put on this persona that you don't have to."
- That's what he said earlier.
- You could do whatever you want.
- **Looking at the accomplishment, they don't feel the need to go to accomplish something to make them feel happy when we feel the need to, if we're not there if we're not doing this, then we don't feel happy with ourselves.**
- We look for that external.
- But also we get called lazy like if we don't get stuff done.
- Yeah.
- **At home?**
- Yeah, my mom calls me a lazy...
- **So it's a punishment-reward system. So like we internalize that like we look for that external like if someone calls you...**
- If I don't get a certain amount of homework, I get yelled at.

- Right if you're called lazy, if someone calls you lazy instead of like, saying I know I'm not lazy, like I did all this it's like, "God now I need to prove that person wrong," so it's almost like an accomplishment.
- Yeah
- But they don't do that because they don't care.
- Yeah it's very much how people look at you. Not they're very, oh it's like whatever like a stranger on the train I don't have to like sit up or like look cute because I'm going out in public. But they put on jeans and T-shirt and be content whereas some of us have to we have to do a bit extra and we're like, how does the public see us? So what are we doing? How are we sitting? How we eating? It's kind of like how people view us we take that in more than they do if that makes sense.
- **Yeah it makes a lot of sense. So here, let me end it with this. This probably goes against counseling philosophy but I'll give you a little bit of an experience I had. So I know any of you have had me in class have heard me talk about this a lot. My junior year I spent in Scotland and you know, I was there for a whole year. It was great. And, I just want you guys you know, a lot of the experiences and thoughts you guys are having now, it's very normal when you're in a culture that's different than your own even though in Scotland they speak English, even though there's more similarities between Scotland and the United States it was still this experience where there's little things I was not expecting. And I get over there and I'm like, "Why is this this way? Why is this happening?" And I remember about the first three weeks we were like it was just bliss. I was like, "Oh this is incredible!" And then after three weeks I was kind of like, I kind of want my routine. I want my normal life. And I remember one of my friends and I for like a week straight in between classes, we'd go to a pub every day and we'd just sit there and complain and complain and complain. And what that complaining was, was just kind of helping us organize our thoughts, and recognizing the things going on around us, and recognizing, "Hey these things are different but not necessarily bad." And I think like, the cool thing for you guys, see you guys were here for 10 days and you're already starting to see that.**
- That's exactly what happened during this.
- **And you guys are in someone's house, and get to have that experience. As you guys were talking about with hotels versus living in someone's home, most you don't get that and that's really cool and it's really cool to see and I think that even at the beginning. That's why I want to do this today. You guys got some frustrations out about like, and it's hard. It's very hard to be in a different culture. Being in someone else's home. You got those frustrations out. But during this, I also hear from of you about these wonderful experiences that you're having and things that you really do enjoy. So part of it is a couple things. For the rest of the week number one: when you have any frustrations about anything talk about it with someone. Talk about it with other American students, with any of the teachers, I mean I'm more than happy to sit and listen to you guys vent about anything. Talk about it with your partners because when you get that stuff out, it's out there. It's in the open. You can think about it, but then it also gives you an opportunity to clear thoughts you notice the things that you actually enjoy. So don't hold that stuff in. That's what this whole experience is. Because it's processing. It's making sense of all that. Second thing I want to say: for the rest of the week, try to look from a lens of the Danish students. Try to look from instead of judging your experiences**

based on what we're used to at home, try and just go through each experience and just be in that moment of that experience. Ok, so rather than say, "Oh my God, at home I would want to do this, this, and this." Just say "Ok, this is what we're doing right now." I'm thinking about this experience right now and just see what that's like for the rest of the week. Ok, because we want to leave the expectation of how things are in the United States. We want to leave that at home and just experience what your partners are experiencing, ok.

Appendix J: Group 3 Interview

Monday, April 1, 2019

My comments and questions are in Bold.

- **Ok, so we have group three with Marissa, Lisa, Amanda, Brendan, Julie, Denny, Denise, Emilia, Jen, and Kelly. Ok, just to go over a couple things.**
- Is this a recorder?
- **It's a recorder, yea. My dad is a psychologist and every morning he used to use one of these to type his reports.**
- That's terrible.
- I feel like.
- That's pretty epic.
- Well, I mean,
- **What's cool about this one is that it has software, so everything that is said I plug it into my computer and type it out.**
- Oh, that is so nice.
- I'm curious how it does certain sounds that aren't words.
- Let's all talk at different times.
- Well I'll find out.
- Or what about when multiple people talk at once.
- **Well that will bring us to our rules.**
- Oh no.
- So...
- It's like in kindergarten when someone's talking.
- I don't know if I'm good at this.
- It's going to suck.
- Do we have to raise our hand if we're going to talk?
- **No, no, no. So let me go over a couple things. First off, again as I told you guys before, the only people who are going to listen to these recordings are myself, and my advisor. Anything that is said, could be used in a court of law.**
- *group laughs*
- **Nah, anything that is said could be used in my final dissertation, but nothing that is said will be identified to you. So with that said, everything that's said in this room, I want nothing to leave here, and that's myself included. I want you guys to be open. I want you to be honest. I want to hear good. I want to hear bad. I want to hear confusing. I want to hear enlightening. Whatever it might be, I want you to talk about. Don't worry about what I want to hear, or what you think I want to hear. I want you guys to tell me what you're thinking, what you're feeling. I don't care about language. If things come out, now let's not be obnoxious about it, but if things come out this is a completely different session than being in a classroom at school. Let me finish this, and then I'll get to that. I'm not going to make you guys raise your hands, I want this to be a discussion, so I'm going to ask some questions from time to time. I'm not going to like give a question and go what do you think, what do you think, what do you think. I'm going to put something out**

there. This is more of a group discussion. If I need to step in, or if I feel I need to step in or want to step in with a statement, I will, otherwise, you guys are free to talk and you can ask each other questions about your experiences. The one thing though is, if someone's talking, just don't talk. Wait your turn. If you are trying to get something out and you can't, then you can raise your hand if you need to, but I want this to be a normal discussion, like when you guys were with each other, when you were in Sweden this weekend, I'm sure you weren't raising your hand to talk.

- We weren't supposed to?
- *laughs*
- **Denny, you're your own person. So, you know, just kinda keep that in mind. Try not to have side conversations. That's one thing, don't have side conversations 'cause I don't think this thing can handle all of us talking at once. So if one person's talking, let them talk. Get yourself out, get your opinion out there. What's your question Denny?**
- Uh, do you want me to relate back to last year, or did you want me to stick to this year?
- **Denny, you can talk, this is open to anything. Now just keep in mind that you're going to have a much different experience than what other people had. So maybe kinda focus on your experience this year, because I'm sure it's different than what last year was like. So we'll talk about that. Everybody good with that? Questions, comments, concerns, anything? Ok guys, we don't have unlimited time, I know the last group talked a lot which was great. But first thing, so, I want to get to is just ask you guys this, tell me about the weekend. Tell me about the first three days here: experiences, thoughts, anything.**
- The first day felt so long, holy smokes...
- Yea.
- I was done by 8pm, holy smokes. And then we had the rest of the day, and then it kinda fell into pattern.
- **So you were done when you got off the plane?**
- Yea.
- It was just like...
- I felt like I should go to bed.
- Thursday night was never a thing, Like there's no Thursday night
- **So did that affect you, being able to under- like get through Friday?**
- No.
- **Did you guys power through?**
- Well like the middle of the day, like when it hit like noon, like when it hit three, that time I felt like a walking zombie. But like, when you got to like, your home, and like you relaxed for a little bit then you felt a little bit better and then like Friday night or whatever you were kinda like woke up more.
- By Friday night.
- I just felt like in the middle of the day I just felt like a walking zombie, and when we were dancing even I felt like I was falling asleep when dancing, even though we were constantly moving.
- **Could you imagine if you had to like, sit in a classroom.**
- Yea I know.
- I would fall asleep.

- I definitely felt like, ‘cause I knew what I was getting myself into, like I felt more awake this time around cause I knew what we were doing for the most part, and like...
- **You were prepared for it?**
- Yea, I was mentally charged, not charged, but mentally prepared for it.
- Yea.
- It didn’t hit me by surprise, but like, how tired I was gonna be, like I just kind knew.
- Yea.
- **What are different impressions that you’ve had over the past couple days?**
- I like it, I like their pace of life, I love it.
- What do you mean their pace of life?
- I think, just compared to the American way where we’re always rushing into high rigor and demand, academically sports and such. Just to have a break from that. One you can relax and refresh, but you can also reflect on, I guess different cultural things, but also individual things that you hold important. Like, for me, I think a big one is the definition of success in America is a lot different than here.
- That’s true.
- Where like, my partner’s brother is very smart, and very bright, and he’s going to a school where they cobble shoes and learn how to do these weird dances, and it seems to me like a waste of potential, but that’s just my mindset, as an American. I would be like, we need to optimize this, and maximize anything he can do in life.
- Yea.
- Which is like, he said, I was like, you should be a politician. He immediately dismissed it because he would overstress himself and work himself to death. And I was like, well I don’t know, that’s kinda what we do.
- *laughing*
- Yesterday I took a run because I had so much energy. After we went to Sweden, Katie and I went for a run. They were like, “How are you doing this? You have so much energy.” And I was like, “I guess I’m just trained for it”
- **So it’s interesting ‘cause like, I was saying this to the other group, I was like you have a lens that you look through, to see the world, and that lens is based on, it’s formed by your experiences. And so that’s real interesting because you’re already perceiving that, like the pace of life is different because you’re looking at the pace of life here, versus the pace of life at home, and that, I don’t know, that’s cool that you picked up on it.**
- It’s really funny, cause like, my partner also brought up, he was like, “I don’t feel stress. I’m like a guru.” I’m like, “Dude I can’t go one day without, like I lose sleep at night because I’m very stressed out.” And yet I kinda feel like the same thing, they have a lot of what we would see as, what we would see as academic potential, but they hold themselves back to avoid stress. Whereas over in America any little drop of potential you have, you’re supposed to use it and keep going, no matter how stressed out you get.
- Yea I noticed how, like, Danes, don’t really seem to be stressed over anything. Whereas Americans, we’re even stressed now about being here over schoolwork. When they were like, yea we didn’t have to worry about any of that. Their like, situation is different of course because their whole class is with us, but with us, we’re even stressed being here with school work and they never ever seem to be stressed about anything. And it’s kinda like, our whole lives are stressful, does that make sense?

- Yea, it does.
- But I feel like they don't care about anything. Like yesterday on the train, I was talking, and this guy, like, started talking to me because...
- That was so funny.
- Yea, he like moved here from America. He like came for a visit one time and fell in love, but he was saying how like, they like don't show off their money. It's like, they like shun you if you like show off your money and show off your wealth.
- I've heard that.
- It's kinda like everyone is just like equal.
- I don't know that's interesting though because they all wear Gucci.
- *laughing*
- And wait, I have something to say too. Like the other day I saw a guy have like, airpods in, and like, my partner was telling me, like, everyone buys them, even if they don't have the money because, they're like, kinda like, worried about the way they're perceived, and, I just thought that was interesting.
- Do we do that at home too?
- Oh yea.
- It's different.
- I think it's like, there's all sorts of different ways that happens, like for them it's like specifically in like, the clothing brands they wear, and like the style they have.
- Yea.
- Versus us I think It's more to do with, somewhat of that, but it's also...
- Almost like your home like, how big is your house and what cars do you drive?
- Quantity more than quality.
- Yea like their like, style of clothing, like everywhere I've looked nobody like dresses how we dress in America. Like we show up to school wearing sweatpants and sweatshirts.
- Also, they were, I remember talking to my partner and she was amazed by the variation in style we have because we have people in sports gear, people in more of the European style and all sorts of variations.
- Yea, they all have dress pants I've noticed. Like what we would wear to a business meeting.
- Yea, they wear those like black dress pants to school.
- I saw a baby yesterday wearing a Gucci bib, like, I'm not even kidding you, I like looked at Kerry and was like, are you kidding me right now?
- I got teased because I brought two pairs of sweatpants. They were like, "oh, do you think you're going to wear those to school?" And I'm like, "I was thinking that, but I guess I'm not anymore!" The nicest thing I brought was a pair of jeans.
- I was like, we were told specifically to bring nice clothing to go to parliament, and they were like, you would have to be told that? Because we don't normally dress that way!
- I've always noticed with clothes, it seems like they have very nice clothes, but they don't have a lot of them.
- Yea.
- That's what I was told.
- I completely agree with that.
- They don't have closets.
- Yea, no, they don't.

- At least my family doesn't have closets, and they have, I don't know, like...
- Racks.
- Yea, they have like, racks, and they just like hang up the clothes and they have like...
- And they wear like, the same kinda stuff, like again and again.
- Yea.
- Like, my partner has worn the same sweatshirt since I've gotten here.
- *laughing*
- I feel like so do some Americans.
- Yea, but not normally.
- Yea, cause, we're living out of our suitcase here, they're at home.
- No but I'm saying at home, I know people who wear the same sweatshirt every single day.
- **But you know specific people, but do you think it's as common?**
- It's not as common, no.
- So like, tell me about other impressions. I mean being in someone else's home, what do you think with Danish society in general? I wanna hear everything.
- I noticed, I don't know if this is in all houses, but the houses I've been in so far, the light switches are like, really weirdly located. Like outside the bathroom.
- *Laughing*
- OUTSIDE THE BATHROOM! IT's so annoying!
- I like walk in the bathroom shut the door, and I like, can't find the lightswitch. And I have to open the door again, it's so stupid.
- I do that every day, OH MY GOD!
- I only have like, one bathroom too.
- One or two, yea.
- My person has two bathrooms, like, right literally next to each other and I'm like, why? And one doesn't. One is literally like a shower and doesn't have a toilet. It's weird. I was like, ok.
- Another cool thing I noticed is my partner doesn't live in the same town as the school, but another town near here, like 20 minutes, and it's like such a small farm town. He's like, yea there's like only two or three people from the school that live here, but it's like so close to the inner part of the city, I'm like I got the full European style country living over there. There's a church like, a two-minute walk away and I hear the church bells every morning, and they're so used to it. I'm like, "Do you guys here it? and they're like "Wait, oh yea the bells, that happens every morning."
- They don't even think about it anymore?
- Yea, no, it's something normal for them.
- What I think is like interesting too is they really identify with their town that they live in. And like, they have like, so much identity with their town. It's just weird, I mean it's just different.
- Yea, they all like, talk about how their town is better than like, someone else's town. Even if you live in a town, it's like, this side's so much better than that side.
- And they like, really identify with their town, which I think is interesting because even with us, we kinda identify with our school in some way, like even if someone lives in Glenmoore, and like someone lives in Lionville, you're not like, you know, gonna be like different in a way. So I think that's interesting.
- Did you guys hear about like, the crime part of this town?
- Yo, she was telling me all about that!

- *Laughing*
- I'm like, that's nothing compared to cities near us, like, come on, they're very scared of this one specific location, like, midtown
- **What's the crime?**
- It's like, pickpocketing, maybe.
- *laughing*
- Maybe somebody comes up with a plastic knife to rob you or something.
- I don't even know what like, it was. They were having some problems.
- **Marissa, what were you going to say?**
- Oh, my partner was like talking about how everyone she knows wants to like, live where they live, like when they grow up, and like, keep living there. Where people in like, our town, like, can't wait to leave.
- **What do you guys think about that? Because I've heard that before.**
- Oh, I'd never live in our town.
- **Just the general difference that Marissa's bringing up. Do you think that's a similar thing?**
- Yea, like, my partner's dad was telling me that him and the dad of another girl who goes here have been friends since high school. And now their daughters are best friends and they're probably going to follow suit.
- Well I find it interesting because where my grandparents, where they grew up, a lot of people stay in the same area, and they live there now, and they stay.
- **Might be like a generational thing.**
- Its, that kinda reminds me of that, like that's what previous generations did.
- I think it's a generational thing that now like, we have so many opportunities, like with planes and everything like that, and social media, like it's easier to get in touch.
- You could also take that as like, the whole difference in pressure thing. Like they still are relaxed, like our parents and grandparents, like they don't feel like, the need to move. Like I don't think I'm gonna live in our town. I'm leaving for college, let alone the rest of my life.
- I think they, like, last night I was talking at dinner with the mom, and she was just saying how they just have so much like, national pride, and they were talking about getting rid of the Danish kroner and all, switching to the Euro or whatever. And they just want to hold on to whatever Danish culture they have, and like, just people coming into Denmark from other countries. She was telling me at some daycare they like, serve pork for lunch or whatever, and some people were getting really mad about that, because like, the Muslims' culture, they don't eat the pork and like I don't know it's like this whole debate. And they're like trying to hold on to whatever Danish things they have if that made any sense.
- **Yea, like, I have two questions. You guys bring up some really awesome stuff. Do you think the pride, I mean again, you've been here for three days and I don't know if you've picked up on this, but is Danish pride different than American pride?**
- Yea, they're not as obnoxious and in your face about it. Americans are like, "Here's our flag. We wear it everywhere and on all of our clothing." And they like, they're proud of their flag, but I think they would be weirded out by wearing it.
- But I think the difference of what makes an American and what makes a Dane are very different. Like America, it's a melting pot, we have people from all over the world and it's

kinda easy to see someone on the street and be like, oh, they're an American. But here it's kinda easy to see who's a Dane and who's not.

- Yeah, for sure.
- They were also directly affected by World War II and Hitler. My partner told me all about that. They don't love nationalism.
- Yesterday, on the way to Sweden I rode with Cathleen's partner. I didn't take the train, and as we crossed the border we took out our passports, and compared to my partner's passport, I don't know if you noticed, but our passport is covered in like, American stuff and culture.
- Like the statue of Liberty.
- And their passport is very plain. So we were comparing them, and saying like, we show it in everyone's faces.
- **Well its interesting because the passports have changed, because I just got a new passport two years ago and my two previous passports didn't have those flags. That's just been added in. So like theirs are just blank?**
- Yea.
- I don't think they feel the need to like show it. Like, show that they have it, like hugee.
- Hygge,
- *lauging*
- Ok, thanks, that's what it reminds me of. They like don't have to show it. They just have it
- **What do you think of that? Does anyone have any impressions of that?**
- Of what?
- Just the difference. It's not as in your face.
- I feel like they're more proud of their modern day accomplishments, and America's more interested in its history and stuff.
- **In what way?**
- Um, well, I don't know. Americans like to talk about all the stuff it's done in its past. They're like, this is where we're going to go. I don't know how to give an example.
- I can kinda agree with that, like I was talking to my partner's dad and all I heard about, he was trying to give me a little bit of a history lesson. He didn't seem too interested, I didn't hear anything about Denmark in the Medieval Ages, all he said with the nationalism thing was Malmo was Danish a while ago, that was pretty much it.
- Funny guy.
- Ok, about the modern accomplishments. I feel like, ok just let me lead in with my antecedent, the other day I was in the car with my partner and her mom. We were taking turns playing music. My partner kept playing American pop music or British pop music, and her mom was like, play something Danish and we get to the museum and there was a little modern Danish exhibit. And apparently there was a very big deal when this Danish guy singer, I don't know exactly, died last year. And they had a little thing about it there. And my partner's mom was telling me like, oh yeah, this guy was like, the Danish version of a bunch of singers that I'm probably supposed to know but I don't and so I feel like um, they're very proud of Danish stuff because Denmark is a small country and its easy, especially nowadays, to get influence from England, America. So when they have something that's Danish, they're like yes, yes, guys look at this, it's from here, yes, it's ours!
- Legos, Lucas Graham, the Little Mermaid
- They love the Little Mermaid.

- **Did you guys see the statue?**

- My partner was like, she was gonna take me there.
- My partner was like, there's always like, Chinese people around it taking pictures of it.
- We saw it on the boat and she was like, "Yea we're not going to see it it's a waste of time," and I was like, "Ok."
- It's so small.
- Yea it's so insignificant.
- And apparently she lost her arm and her head at various points in time, and it was shipped to China for a time,
- Yea my partner said her head was cut off twice. I don't know what that's supposed to mean.
- What is that called, like mutilated.

- **Decapitated**

- *laughing*
- Mutilated would be any other body part.

- **I didn't know that about that.**

- Yea they said it. Like we went on the river tour and that's what they said.
- Another thing is I was talking to her parents when we went over to Sweden and they were like, a lot of the Swedes come over here and like, just buy a bunch of alcohol because it's so cheap.
- The clothes in Sweden were so cheap.
- Were they?
- Cheaper than here?
- Cheaper than here and I think cheaper than in the US. Like we went to Zara and it was so cheap.

- **That's the big mall?**

- Yea. No, it's like a store in the mall, but we did go to the big mall, and I'll buy stuff in there and it's so much cheaper to buy it in Sweden than it is in America than if you buy it at home.
- Stock up.
- Yea, you know it.
- Well I think it's because it's more convenient here that there's multiple of that.
- Yea, like jeans in America are so much cheaper, yea like they're come over and buy like eight pairs and bring them back cause its easier.
- Yea, my partner made a deliberate effort to go to a shoe store while she was in the US because the shoes were cheaper there apparently.
- Yea, my partner bought a pair of shoes.
- **Yea, I always feel like the guys buy sneakers when they came over. That was always a big thing.**
- We get them easier from the sweatshops than they do.
- Jesus.
- No, we do, I didn't just make that up.
- It's all the tariffs on them.
- Yea.
- One thing I've noticed, is when we were riding the train the other day, like riding into Copenhagen, is strangers would go up and just sit next to a random person and like they wouldn't even acknowledge them. Like they wouldn't even say hi to them. And like, normally

if I were to get on the train I would just be like hey, can I sit here? You know what I mean, like they don't talk at all. They don't like, I ran into people too and I was like, "Excuse me? Or sorry?" And they don't say anything back. And they come across like they don't have manners, and I think that's interesting too.

- **So Lisa, that's really interesting that you say that, like it comes across like they don't have manners. Have people had similar impressions?**
- Like, I say thank you they don't say anything back.
- Or when I say thank you, my partner's like, "You don't have to thank us." And I'm like, "Why not? You're doing all this for us. Of course I'm going to thank you!"
- My partner's dad told me that too. He was like, getting coffee for me. It happened today! And I was like, "Oh, thank you." And he was like, "ok." I'm like, alright, I thanked him again because he drove us here, and he said, "You don't have to." I just like did it.
- It's just like natural for them.
- We were at the mall yesterday in Sweden, and I was trying to weave through a crowd, and I was telling everyone like, sorry pardon me.
- And they're just like, right over their head.
- I had one guy bump right into me and didn't like...
- Didn't say sorry at all I think it's interesting. Like I've talked to one person outside of the exchange and it was another American who like, on the train asked me what state I was from. I feel like everyone in the exchange is like, super welcoming, but everyone else is like not.
- Because these ones were expecting us, they know why we're here.
- Yea I know but like even the other people who like go to school here, or random people on the train, they don't like come up to say hi, or literally like smile. You know what I mean? I just feel like...
- Is that hard?
- I had a different experience last year with the whole, no one cares we're American thing. I mean these were kids, so it might be different. My guy last year coached soccer, and he just happened to drop that I was an exchange student and these kids swarmed me and they're all like bilingual, which is crazy. So they're speaking French, German, English at me and I like, when I told them I'm American they were like, "Wow, they exist."
- **So that was a specific incident, but in general what would you say?**
- Yea, in general it's hit or miss. Like I'll sometimes have people come up to me if they hear me speak English, 'cause I did in Copenhagen Saturday.
- **And was it another American?**
- No, I was just talking and someone turned around and they were like, "where are you from?" It's not as prevalent.
- I like, literally no one.
- I was on the train, or the bus and this lady was sitting next to me with a baby and we were talking about, she's from Copenhagen, and we were talking about what I was here for and everything.
- Well we were downstairs, like literally ten minutes ago, just sitting down in the cafeteria and my partner just turned around and looked at me and she was like, "They're so shy. They, don't want to come talk to you? and I was like, "Why?" and she just said, "Danish people are so shy I just watched my friend walk in here, see you guys, and walk right out." And I was like, "I'm not going to do anything, I'm just going to sit here"

- And I wonder if that has anything to do with their English? Like some people were like, some of their friends are insecure about their English, which I get, but even like the older people.
- I was at my partner's cousin's birthday, and one of her relatives, I forget the relation, started talking to me and he kept pausing to ask for random vocab words. He kept apologizing and I was like, "dude you are literally holding a conversation, and I keep accidentally talking really fast, you're fine."
- They always, so I was, we were talking about prom yesterday and like they were like asking me like what we do. And they were asking, "Do the boys like, come to your house, and get you flowers and everything? And I was like, "Yea." And they were like, "It's like a movie. Its exactly like a movie."
- They watch a lot of American movies so they're like, "Oh."
- There's shows on Netflix.
- Well when they came here, they thought it was high school musical.
- *laughing
- They also said that when they were in America that high school that high school was nothing like high school movies.
- Really? Because my person said it was exactly like what they imagined.
- They said they thought we'd have a lot more freedom, and I was like, well we have four minutes in between classes and if we're late to class, you get in trouble so it's like...
- That's what I noticed that we're more formal. Like they have a lot more free time.
- I was like, I don't know. Like you could leave the cafeteria when we were doing the thing so I'm like, "Where are all the Danes?" And they're like, "they left to walk around."
- You can't get away with that in the US.
- We have to sign out.
- Yea.
- I think in private schools it's more like that, it's more open because there's less kids so there's less you have to worry about.
- Yea, I agree with that. We've got a lot of strict rules. I think even at the other high school, it's more.
- They're more free. Even one of my friends, they eat their lunch in their teacher's classrooms.
- 180 cameras.
- Love that.
- **Well, I want to go back to the manners thing and the openness to strangers thing, because I think that, you guys seem to be on the same page with that. What differences with manners have you picked up on? And has anything happened that you've been taken aback by and been like a little uncomfortable or what?**
- I was shocked at how informal they talk to their parents.
- Yea, they curse, it's great.
- They curse, even at the table. I, and my parents are somewhat different in that they're a little ok with me cursing and they have this thing of proper context for some reason. But like if I was just to curse the way they did it, it would be a completely different reaction. And they're able to joke around with their parents a lot more.
- Yesterday when I was at Cathleen's partner's for dinner, he was, his parents were in the kitchen, like I saw the parents, but they never approached me to meet me.
- Yea they didn't even say hi.

- Which is kinda like weird to me because like, every time I walked into a Dane's house the family would come to the door for me but they didn't. But we were in the kitchen just talking and Cathleen's partner was making fun of us. And his humor is a little different and he was cursing so loudly and I was like, "How are your parents ok with this? My parents would be so mad at me," and he didn't seem to care so much.
- Both years, on the American leg of it, I swear to God both of the Danes have sworn, like they've gone full F in front of my parents. And like, they kinda, it's so natural to them, they drop into it, like they'll snap and be like, "Oh shit!"
- I love how they curse in English.
- You hear them talk and they're just like "F this. F that."
- Or like even mix in with their Danish.
- It's the same thing like, they don't have it in Danish.
- I think it's because they don't have the same meaning to them. Because it's just a word. They don't understand the whole cultural backlash we're use to facing from it.
- And it's also, I remember when they came to America like um, my partner was asking me if we say the N-Word ever, and I was like, "NO!"
- Yea that's a big no.
- They say that here regularly and I'm just like...
- Well, because they don't have the background, like, we've been instilled from a young age like, we read *To Kill a Mockingbird* and we're specifically told this is how it shouldn't be, like do not say this word.
- Oh yeah, she asked that in the car, and I stopped the car, and I was like, "Do not say that please!"
- Yea, well then again, if how I mentioned it's a melting pot in America, we have a lot more restrictions because we have a lot more people.
- They could get offended by that.
- Yea.
- They just don't understand.
- Like the whole pork thing in the daycare, you can't get away with that in America.
- Because we have Muslims and Jews.
- Yea, we try to accommodate everybody and can't really get away with that in America and here it's the Danes. There's 5 million something people here like, its easier to just have that homogenous culture and we're a product of several generations of immigrants from all over the world.
- Yea, I found it interesting how many people I saw that weren't of color or from other parts of the world.
- A lot of white blondes.
- Yea, *laughing*
- And I don't know if I saw when we were in Christiania, I remember seeing one of the artwork, and one of the things written on it, they didn't want racism. And I don't know if that's prevalent here. And I haven't gotten to ask my partner yet because they're not used to seeing people from all over.
- Yea, I remember even when we were at our school, I don't remember what Dane asked me. But they said, "you guys have so many different races here," and I was like, "Yea, it's just our

school and we accept everyone.” And I just found that to be funny that they even like, brought that up.

- **Have people had some experiences with people picking up on a lack of...**
- Diversity?
- **Yea like the fact there’s a lack of diversity, but maybe shock value from some of your Danish partners?**
- I don’t know what you’re asking.
- **Not shock value but like, was there the same surprise from your Danish partners as what Julie’s partner is talking about right now?**
- They’re not as vocal but definitely like, you can tell when the Danes were hanging out with my group you could tell ok this is a little more of a diverse group than they’re used to.
- Yea the Danes really like being together and it’s kinda confusing at times. We’ll be in a group together and they’ll just like, leave and talk Danish together.
- They’re their own cult.
- Yea, like yesterday when there was a group in Malmö there was this big group of 40, and I noticed when the group started to split off the Americans were with the Americans and the Danes were with the Danes.
- But, I feel like it’s not like us who are segregating. They want to be together.
- **Because they’re so much closer?**
- Sometimes I think it’s also because with them it can be kinda difficult. I was actually talking to my partner about this because I was wondering this. Sometimes it’s hard when we are talking, we of course talk in all English because we speak English. They, when they’re talking to their friends, they talk in all Danish. And when they wanna, like yesterday, when we were trying to make plans, they said that they were going to get together and speak Danish because they needed to speak in their own language sometimes, even with me it can be kinda frustrating. Like I’m talking to my partner and he’s talking to another in Danish and it’s kinda frustrating.
- Yea I wanna know what they say.
- It’s like, sometimes just speak in English.
- I think it’s the funniest thing ever like, my partner sometimes accidentally speaks Danish to me. And she’s like, “Oh shit I forgot!”
- Yesterday in Sweden, they were walking so fast and like, we didn’t know where we were going, and didn’t know what was going on. And they were on the other side of the street and they were still going and we were like, we don’t know where we’re supposed to go.
- Then they do this thing where they keep walking and they don’t know where they’re supposed to be going, and they’re like, we’re just going to keep going this way.
- I’m not trying to be mean, but like they have not really had a plan. Like yesterday, we ran through the train station three times. We missed our train, like I’m dropping things as I’m running through the station.
- See that doesn’t bother me, because like...
- I like having a plan.
- It doesn’t bother me, but like, it’s frustrating.
- I feel like I had things planned for when they came here.
- **So, this actually came up with the last group. So let me ask you guys this: do you see, first off, how many of you was it frustrating to have a specific plan?**
- Yes and no.

- I'm the type of person that plans every minute of vacation down to the point where we have free time scheduled in.
- No I'm not like a plan 9:01 we're doing this, 9:02 we're doing this.
- But like today we're going to be doing this.
- But people start to fight when we're trying to figure out what to do. And everyone's like, no I want to do this, I want to do this, I wanna do this, and we're all like...
- It's like they wanna plan, but they'll bring something up, then like Emilia said, they'll just fight about it and like, to have a bit of a plan, like I don't need to have specifics but I want a bit of a plan instead of like, wandering aimlessly like let's go do something, even if we can't agree on it.
- Sometimes it's good, like even in Copenhagen we kind of were like, we're going to walk around for a bit, then at like 3:00 or whatever, we're gonna go find food then it's like, we have an hour and a half to do like whatever and wander around then we have this time where we're gonna meet at a restaurant and you have to be there.
- About like, Copenhagen on Saturday, right so like we spent the morning with her family and then we were going to meet people in the afternoon. And it was kinda up in the air and I was texting Denise and to see if we wanted to meet up or whatever, but then we literally just ran into Brendan and Katie and were like, oh. And then we like stayed together with them and then we literally just ran into more people and stayed with them. And yea, it's frustrating that no one really knows what they're doing. Like I saw some of the Danes were like getting stressed out like, I saw gosh, like we don't know what we're doing. Like everyone's plans are all over the place. And I totally get how that's frustrating at some points, but it all works together.
- No, I'm not saying like I can't like go with the flow, but when you're at the train station you should know like, what train you're supposed to take, and at what time. I understand like you might not know that well, but I feel like you should have that. You should know.
- **Are there cultural differences that might play into that though?**
- I think there is?
- Maybe how relaxed they are. Like us, we're not used to being on a schedule. Like you have to be doing something constantly. And they're like oh, we'll go and do this, and they'll take their time to get there.
- I don't agree.
- My parents are like what are you doing when?
- Yea my parents will get mad if I have to change plans. They're like, you do what you want, I get like a thirty-minute lecture how I can't change plans three hours in advance while my partner's mom is just sitting outside of the house and he's like, we'll come back in an hour and she's just like, ok.
- Yesterday, when we went to Sweden, we were in Sweden for a while, then people like started like arguing because we didn't know what to do. So me and Cathleen's partner, like he took the carload to the mall, but my partner has never been to the mall and he's been there once and he's asking me where to park and I'm like, "Dude this is a foreign country I've never been to, and you're asking me where to park?" And he's getting mad at me, and I'm like, "I'm literally an American in Sweden. I don't know why you're asking me." And he's yelling at me and I'm like, I don't know why you're yelling at me.
- Yea I get that, I don't think it's more of a cultural difference. It's personality in some ways and also like, it's hard, like we were even debating what are we doing for lunch. Are we going to

the mall? And I think that was like so hard because it was a big group with so many opinions and everyone wanted to do something a little different. So I feel like that added to it and I just don't think it's like, personally it doesn't seem to me like it's cultural. More of like, situational.

- A lot of people were stressed when we were in that big group in Sweden.
- **That is hard, I mean, being in a big group is hard.**
- 'Cause like, they're all friends, and they all want to stick together. And like, that's cool and all when it's just them.
- When they're like we're splitting up and we're like you can't do this.
- Yea you can't manage 60 people walking around a foreign city.
- And even like shopping, like people wanted to go into one shop then another shop.
- Yea some people were hungry, some people weren't.
- Yea, and they weren't like fine with people leaving to go to one store. They were like oh, we have to stick together.
- We left.
- I know.
- They were like, you can have free time, like, go ahead. 'Cause that's what we did in America we were like, just go explore.
- I was like so confused though when I was shopping in Sweden. I stayed with her because she doesn't speak English like that well, so like if they were asking her questions and stuff like Kerry and I were buying stuff, and they like started asking us all these questions in Swedish and like, I know nothing, but they can kinda like, understand, but they were like, gone and that was like um I like looked at her.
- It was awkward talking at the register and I was like "Hello," and I don't think they typically use hello, so like, I was like, what am I doing?
- When I like, bought something I was like, I don't understand and the lady like, helped me.
- They made me feel stupid though.
- But they said they don't even understand. Like when they go and buy stuff there they speak English to them because they don't speak...
- The Swedes can understand the Danish. But they don't understand them. The way they explained it, they have a super strong dialect that they can't understand.
- **Yea, it's a much different way of speaking.**
- I went and checked out and the lady was not nice or helpful.
- **Well that might have been that specific person.**
- Yea, I had a different experience. Like again I walked up to the cash register and I was asking some questions and I was speaking in English, and I think they asked in Swedish if I spoke Danish because they overheard my partner and Brendan's partner, and I just go, "American" and they were like, "oh where are you from?" And they asked me the whole thing.
- **Wait, Lisa go ahead and then I want to bring it back to another point.**
- Ok, two things. First one: just like I noticed this when I went to one of the shops, the woman was like, "Oh let me know if you need help with anything." I was like, "thanks," because like no one ever said that before and also like Amanda I think that sucks like, your partners weren't there to help you like when Amy and I, we went shopping for like shoes and Amy didn't know what shoes she was like, "I'm a size 8" and my partner was like, really helpful in helping us get the shoes and everything, 'cause she's been there a lot before because of her cousin lives there.

- **I think two things, and Lisa I think you kinda touched on this with my first point. Yea, remember with individual personalities there's going to be personality differences so we want to be careful of looking at the way one person acts as being representative as people in Denmark and people in Sweden as a whole, you know? The second thing, and I think to bring back to a point Amanda had made a couple minutes ago about the timing and about the having a plan, and this came up in the last group, and more in the last group were very frustrated by this: you know you guys talked in the beginning about there being this, a definition of success. They don't have the same level of stress, I mean think about the lives we live in America. I think for all of us. My generation included, we grew up with schedules. This time you've got this practice. That time you've got recital. This rehearsal. This party to go to. Like, we in America, we have this, a lot of, we have very few times where we have unstructured time. Do you guys agree with that?**
- Yeah.
- Yeah, like it's to the point where dinner you have to move it around to fit the schedule and like then people are off, like at my house that's a big deal.
- He just eats whenever he feels like it, and he's like, "I'm hungry let's eat" I'm like...
- **Is that the sense that, are you getting that sense like Denny's partner like we're going to eat when we eat?**
- We've been in smaller groups, so I think it's easier when it's four people.
- **That's definitely true. And then in terms of not having a plan thing. Maybe that's part of not having stress. We like schedule our lives...**
- It's not like I'm saying like, I need everything planned out. But I feel like if you're going to a foreign country you should know what train you're supposed to take.
- No but even like some people got stressed because they didn't have a plan. Like, oh my gosh we don't know what we're doing dah dah dah dah dah. Like I saw like some of the Danes were getting stressed because no one had a solid answer.
- Yea they were getting stressed out.
- **Now, a lot of the trains run like every 10 minutes so.**
- We only had to wait like 20 minutes, but like I don't know, I would know where I'm going.
- I noticed more the Danes didn't care and we were like what are we doing? Like I feel like we cared more.
- **Ok so there's a divide there between the American students and the Danes.**
- We were sitting there waiting for the bus and you were like everybody come over here and we can try to figure it out.
- Yea, like I don't need a step by step plan, but let's just get one big thing and we'll figure it out on the way there.
- **But is there a difference there with us feeling comfortable with specific plans? What I'm hearing from everybody the Danes are more just like, go with the flow.**
- I don't feel it's go with the flow.
- I feel like it's aimless. I feel like as long as I have a goal, I can do whatever in between because I know as long as I know I'm going somewhere, if we knew that, hey we're going to look around the streets I know what we're doing, but they knew nothing.
- When we went to Malmö we were like, we've never been here before and they're like we're going to just take this road right here.
- This is like, a road to walk on, and I'm like, "What are we doing?" And they're like, "I dunno."

- **So let me switch this and tell you guys this. Now I didn't hear this this year, but the last two years I heard from a lot of the Danish students that when they were in America that they were very frustrated that they were being babied, that they were being parented by their partners and so they felt that there was too much of, "Ok, you're going to do this now, and then we're going to do that," and it was almost like they felt like they were children again being told by their parents where they were going. So how does that influence your thoughts?**
- Well personally, I don't think it bothers me not knowing what I'm doing cause like, that's how I am in my life right now. When I'm in America, everyone gets so annoyed because I never have a plan and I'm just like oh I'm going here.
- **So you fit in right here?**
- Yea it doesn't bother me.
- Again, I'm fine with that as long as there's a goal just one thing that I know.
- **Denny, I know, just let Denise finish.**
- I just like, don't need that. If I don't know what I'm doing, I don't know what I'm doing.
- Cause we're here for only ten days and chances are how many of us are actually going to come back to Denmark and get to experience these things? So for me this is my one chance.
- I feel like they're doing what they do.
- **Alright, let me respond to this and let's get to Lisa. We've only got a few minutes so...**
- You're cutting us off?!
- **Well, we might be doing another, we've been going for like an hour guys!**
- They're letting us experience what they would do. Like I was talking to my partner and she was like, "Yea, what we normally do after school is like, we'll like hang out like, go to someone's house and like, watch a movie" and like us after school would be like, "We're going here and going here," and they're just like chill. Whatever happens, happens.
- **And I think that's a really good point Denise, so and going back to Jen, like let's take these two things and look at them together. So Jen you're like, you know this might be my only time here so I want to experience it, but in that question listen to what Denise is saying. Could you actually be experiencing Denmark?**
- That's so cliché.
- **But that's like more of a tourist view of going to see everything.**
- But then you still come home at night and eat dinner. For me that's where most of it comes from. And I still experience what they normally do with their families.
- I'm fine with just chilling but it's just like, if you're out in Copenhagen...
- Yea, like you still wanna see stuff.
- Like we went to this place for lunch and stuff, and we were like, "What should we get here?" Like, we don't know, we've never been here and they were like, "We don't know we've never been here." And I was just thinking like, if I have never like been somewhere, I would take them somewhere else to eat.
- **But Amanda, listen, we'll get to you in a second Denny, I've got Lisa and then, but Amanda I want to point out something, and it's not criticism or anything like that, but just listen to maybe some of the statements, you know, if I were doing this, if I were doing this, if I were doing this, and so this gets back to that earlier point. We have the lens we're viewing this experience based on how we are back home, what we're used to back home, so what happens if we just take that lens away, and just say instead of what I**

would do, what I would do, what I would do because we did that, we did that in the fall. You guys got to show how you would do things. You scheduled your trips, you scheduled your experiences, what happens if the rest of the time here you go, ok, I'm going to let my expectations go, I'm going to go with what my partner does and just focus on what we're doing right now as we're going there.

- I think I can try, but like, they don't know what they're doing right now.
- And you waste time.
- **But isn't that what they're doing?**
- It's like how they're always like, like they don't know what they're doing.
- **Try and think of it like that, like, they might not have a plan, but maybe that's how they are you know. And try and remove yourself from that, and instead of like, "Hey we want to see this, this and this," "This is what I'm seeing right now, this is what I'm going to focus on right now."**
- Ok, I am normally like, I normally have plans too, like we're doing this at 8 o'clock, cool. That sounds good, I have structure in my life too, but I remember when they were here I had no clue what I was doing, kinda like seeing what everyone was doing, like, last minute things. So I know when they were with us it wasn't like I mean, I was all over the place too. Don't you think? We never really knew what we were doing. Like after school, like literally two minutes before we were like, alright, we'll go to Chick-Fil-A and then like, I don't know we'll go to Target. Like it was all over the place.
- Like they never asked, I feel like we're always asking what we're going to do next, and they're just kinda like, oh whatever happens, happens.
- **And again, think about that, you guys want to know what's coming up next. They didn't know what was coming up next, but then they didn't ask that over there, so think about that. Connect that to the personalities of everything we're saying.**
- But I feel like I don't know if like, I'm maybe I'll know after spending more time, but I still don't know if the not knowing what we're doing is a cultural thing or like literally just the exchange, you know what I mean?
- **It might be both, and it might be, I mean when we talk about a cultural thing, I mean Denmark is a small country, but remember there's different regions of Denmark so maybe the culture of this school, this specific school might be that, it might be different with people in other spots, but that might be what we're here to kind of experience.**
- I mean, my big thing is as long as I have an outline and I have something ...
- **And Denny I hear you, you've said that a couple times.**
- I'm expanding on my idea.
- **I'm just saying it's that same thing of if I have this, if I have this, if I have this and again, we're taking what we're used to and judging our experience now based on what we're used to, and you're saying if I have this, if I have this, if I have this, but look at where all you guys have gotten. You've gotten to school, you've gotten to all of these places. This weekend right, you all have experiences I mean, I've heard you all talk about things that were really fun so far. And obviously we're hearing about things that are not as easy, but, Denny, hold on...**
- Sorry.
- I'll let you go in a second. Go ahead.

- I really like their idea of trying to figure it out, because I'm a very anxious and go-go person as I'm doing right now. And I like how they can just sit back and just figure things out. And I want to learn how to do that because I can't.
- **Marissa go ahead.**
- Well this applies to me personally, but I was worried about coming over here, because I'll get like social anxiety and stuff. And I love how they don't plan ahead because I tend to like, over-think things, and I love how they just go with it, because I think it's like less stressful.
- I'm like the opposite. Like my mind is constantly going a mile a minute. So if I'm not doing something, I'll like, think myself into a deep hole. I need to be like, doing something.
- **Well, I mean, believe me guys, I'm the same way, and so it's kinda hard to step out of that mindset. Like today, like, I get the text of we can't go to Copenhagen because of the trains. I'm like, "Oh my God, what are we going to do today?"**
- We felt so lost and the Danes were like, "We'll just sit here in the cafeteria and talk."
- I was happy I got to sleep.
- Hygge, and that's what it is.
- It's just so funny because all of the Americans are like, "I wish I brought my work, I wish I brought stuff to do."
- **I'm like that too, like I could have brought stuff to grade.**
- I'm like, "I could have gotten so much stuff done during this time period."
- We can't sit still. We just want to keep ourselves occupied.
- **Because we're used to having every minute planned with stuff.**
- Productivity.
- Like they don't care if they waste time. They'll sit around and watch a movie whereas I'll be like, "We need to do this, this, and this."
- **Let me, so we do need to go downstairs, but let me leave us with a couple things. So I'll tell you guys a couple personal things to relate to this right now. So number one, everything you guys are feeling is very normal when being in another culture, because you're encountering things you're not used to. Because you're encountering things that are done in a way that we don't do, and that's hard but part of this exchange is that you're learning to see that for what it is and learn to work through that discomfort. I mean it seems like everyone is having a good time, right?**
- Yeah.
- Definitely.
- **Yeah. Alright, so think about that, you've had a good time even though things are different. And that's what they are, they just work differently. You know, I can tell you guys the way I used to travel, was like, so I did my junior year in Scotland...**
- Wait high school or college?
- **College. So when I was over there, it was hard at first, so we would take trips, you know, whenever we had a break my friends and I would take a trip. And the first couple trips we had everything planned out. We had this plan, we'd go to this museum, we'd go to this spot we're going to get this picture in front of this landmark, and all of that. And after a while, like we started to realize, we're seeing things, but we're not really being here. And it's a very hard thing to break out of that mold. And I remember particularly we were in Florence, and we were standing in line to see "the David" and obviously if you've taken Western-Civ you've seen that statue. It's one of the most famous sculptures ever. And**

standing in that line, after two hours we were closer but the line was moving really slow, and it was going to be another two to three hours before we even got into the museum to see it. We took a step back and were like, wait a second, are we here to see a statue? It would be cool if we could, but we're in one of the most beautiful cities in the world, so we were like, "What would people here do?" So we walked a little bit, found a café, sat outside ate our dinner, and it was one of the greatest realizations ever because it was like, this is what people in Florence do. Not stand in line to see the David. And it's hard to break out of that. I think the other thing too is that because we're used to a certain way of life and doing things a certain way, there's a certain anxiety when we're confronted with doing things differently, but part of this and some of you, you know, part of this exchange is living the life the Danes do. It's not about coming over here and seeing all the sites. You know, you're gonna see them, you will. You may not see all of them, but you're all getting a great experience to live in someone else's home, and actually see how this different culture works. And it might not be the culture you would choose to be a part of, and maybe it is, but you're seeing how it works, and you're actually getting that valuable experience because we do plan everything, and they don't, but you're learning about how someone else does something, just like when they were with us they were stressed, or not stressed but they were uncomfortable with some of the ways that we did things and how we scheduled things, do you know what I mean?

- Yea, I feel the same way because over the summer and it definitely felt like, ok I was going there and seeing things but I did not get the Italian cultural experience whatsoever. Like my parents had everything scheduled like "Ok, on this day from this time to this time we are going to Pompeii. And we have to be out at this time because we have to get the car. Then we're going back to the hotel. Then we're going to Vesuvius the next day. Then we're going back and going to Herculaneum," and blah blah blah blah blah. And it was nice because I got to see all the stuff I wanted to, but basically never interacted with actual Italy. Meanwhile over here, I'm like, I literally know nothing about Denmark so I'm just going to see what happens and it definitely feels more authentic.
- Yea, and let me leave you with two things, and Kelly, that's a really good point. There's a lot of other trips that run in our two schools through companies like Explorica and EF, and Proma Tours which I don't know if you guys have heard of, but you've probably seen those tours advertised around the building. Those tours, you fly over. You get a hotel. You get on a bus. You go to a site. You take some pictures. You get on a bus. You go back to the hotel. That's your day. It's great. You're seeing things. You're taking pictures, but you're not interacting with people, and so this is a little more authentic in that way. Last thing I'm going to leave you with, and then we're done. Hopefully we'll get to do another because this is a really good opportunity. But my challenge for the rest of the week, as much as possible, and it's kinda stepping outside of your comfort zone, as much as possible, try and catch yourself when you're thinking to yourself, "But this is how I would have done it at home. This is how I would have done it when people were coming to visit me. This is how I would have done it in the United States in general." Try and catch yourself when you're saying that and just try to look at it instead as, "This is what they're doing right now." It's hard. It's hard to do in 10 days, but try and catch yourself as much as possible when you're having those thoughts. And just try to remove yourself from the situation and just think, "Ok is this not working at all, or is it just

working differently than what I would have most likely have done?? Are you guys enjoying it overall?

- Yea
- Yea
- Yea
- Yea, it's different than any traveling I would have done.
- **That's awesome, alright, let's go back down to the cafeteria. Thank you everybody.**

Appendix K: Luke Interview

Me: So the same things apply as before in that again, just like the group session the only people that will hear this are my advisor. So most of it is just kind of a conversation, so I'm going to take notes on some things, just kind of thoughts I have and again I want you to be open and honest of course. Not tell me things that you think I want to hear or what you think will help me out. I want you give me the honest reaction to everything you experience. First thing, just as a little background, can you talk about your travel experience prior to going on the exchange?

Luke: I had just gone within the US, I mean I've been all over the US.

Me: Just like what, where have you gone?

Luke: I've done Washington, California, um Texas and then like Northeast stuff, like New Hampshire and all that.

Me: Ok, so that's pretty good. So going into this, what would you say is your openness regarding your thoughts and feelings to new experiences having been around other people with different attitudes and beliefs? How would you describe that openness or those feelings towards that?

Luke: Wait, so can say that again?

Me: Yea so if were talking about openness to new experiences and openness to being around others who have different attitudes and beliefs from you, can you describe what level of openness you have?

Luke: Yea I'm all for it because you learn more you get like, this like, my little pocket, like Chester County, but there's so much more than that you can learn from become more knowledgeable of but also become more accepting because the American way isn't the only way of doing it, even though Americans tend to think that. There's so many other ways of living and so many other belief systems that you can learn and understand that when you travel or when you talk to people that are from another, whether it be part of Pennsylvania or part of the world, you can just learn so much and I do think it makes you so much more accepting when you get to know people on that level, and like understand different ways of life, like we're not all the same.

Me: So yea, I think it's really interesting. Do you think that is something that influenced you to take part in the exchange? Or was it influenced by the exchange or both or neither?

Luke: Um, I mean the exchange started out in my mind as like a reasonable price to get to a different part of the world. That's how it started off to me. Once they were here it became, it wasn't until they were here that it finally started to hit me, that like, we might look the same, but we do so many things different even, even in Europe, like just how wildly different it is then us. I didn't notice it until they got here, like I didn't think of that.

Me: So going into the exchange, you're saying going into the exchange wasn't about...

Luke: Going in it was like, "Oh, going to Denmark, that's pretty Dope." And then afterwards, I like thought about, oh its cool to be having relationships, like actually having actual friendships with people, well it sucks now because I won't see them.

Me: You could still travel over there.

Luke: Yea, I mean realistically speaking, but like it was cool to have but like have an actual understanding and relationship with people that far away that I didn't think I was going to get.

Me: So that's really interesting. You said it wasn't until the fall that you said there's a whole other side to this exchange then just the travel part.

Luke: Yea, yea, yea.

Me: How was that affected, in what way was that affected by the trip over?

Luke: Like going over there?

Me: Yea, like going over?

Luke: There it was like I had gotten a sense, I mean here it was his way of doing things in my environment, there it was like, the tables were flipped, so I mean my way of doing things in his environment, so it was cool. Like getting to see just like, little things, like how his family interacts, like he had a stay at home dad which like, I asked "Is that different?" Like that's really different in the States. You don't ever see that like I don't know any, and he was like, "Yea that's very different, even here in Denmark." And then like his dad was always home and his mom worked, so like little family interactions like that were cool just to see, like they had similar things to my family that made me get along very well. They would just sit back and just make fun of each other over dinner, like that's what my family does. We haven't lately just because we've been so busy, like little things like that. It was cool seeing the little differences, but so many similarities to how we do things.

Me: I get what you're saying.

Luke: That was all over the place.

Me: No, but like, there's some things you had with the family and just the experience in general that were similar was there a comfort in that?

Luke: What do you mean?

Me: I don't know, seeing the way the family interacted and the way the family was similar to your's?

Luke: Yea, that gave me a lot of comfort because it was like they had that deprecating sense of humor and that's how my family is. It made it easier to ease into.

Me: What do you mean?

Luke: 'Cause it was a reminding factor. It was a small similar thing that related back to my family that was like, oh, it made it easier to settle in and it wasn't like I was staying with random people because there was a relationship that came about and these are people that I can kid around with and like just chill with.

Me: So do you feel like that opened a door for you.

Luke: Yea I do because I was basically able to see them in my own family and then it kinda opened up a relationship. Like I got close with both his mom and dad, they were really awesome people.

Me: That's really nice.

Luke: Yea, they were really awesome.

Me: Now did he have any siblings?

Luke: Yea, he had a younger sister, but I almost never saw her.

Me: Ok.

Luke: She was very quiet, so she kept to herself.

Me: Might have been a language barrier or something like that.

Luke: They spoke like, perfect English.

Me: But I wonder with the sister.

Luke: I don't know I just didn't see her.

Me: Well that's really cool so then I guess kinda building off that, you had some of these similarities and some of these differences, but when you had moments where you were confronted with kinda new cultural elements, or new things you weren't used to, whether you were at home, or you guys were at school, or you were off doing whatever you were doing, did you have any type of resistance to any of those differences?

Luke: What do you mean by resistance?

Me: Like did you have almost a little bit of really like, I don't like this so much, or why are they doing this this way?

Luke: It wasn't so much like I don't like this as this is different. Like I feel like in the class was like the one thing that I can think of because you're like just sitting there for so damn long. I mean they let you move, but one subject for an hour and a half, that's a lot for me.

Me: For anybody.

Luke: And also I'm used to 45 minutes here, so that was like really the only thing I can think of, because everything else was just like, different to me like.

Me: So in the stuff that was different did you encounter anything, or do you feel you encounter anything that it may be took you a little bit of time to adjust to?

Luke: Oh I hated their food and I felt so bad because they would like, there is one meal that they spent all day making it was like their Christmas dinner, and they were so excited and they put it in front of me and I was like, what is this, I'm not going to be able to do this.

Me: Was it the pork?

Luke: Yes.

Me: You didn't like that?

Luke: No, No.

Me: Oh you only eat seafood, don't you?

Luke: Yea I don't really do, I do only chicken and turkey just cause like for some reason I'm not good with dark meat. And then I was like trying to be nice, like I'll eat pork, it's fine but it was so bad.

Me: Well did you end up eating it?

Luke: Yea I scarfed it down. I just felt bad because they spent all day. If my mom spent all day, she'd whoop my ass if I didn't eat it. And it was so salty, it was like brine and salt, then they did this steamed cabbage. I was like, cabbage isn't meant to be steamed guys. Then this potato that had caramel on it.

Me: Caramel?

Luke: Yea, they put like sugar or something on it.

Me: Oh it was caramelized?

Luke: Oh, yea yea yea. I didn't really like that. I didn't really like their food.

Me: So why was it so important you do eat that food down?

Luke: Because if someone spent all day making you a meal and especially a meal they make clear is their thanksgiving and Christmas meal, so like, two big holidays is the only time

they eat this meal, then like a guest comes and they're going to make it for you, it's really rude to be like, oh no other stuff. Like they could kinda tell I didn't like just because very salty but like, that one I was like, if you spent all day making a meal, just for one person that one person has to have the respect to eat it.

Me: Luke, I give you a lot of credit because I think that's such a really important aspect of staying in someone else's home, and we often do get served things that we wouldn't have otherwise eat or are asked to do things we wouldn't otherwise do, but that's kind of part of that experience.

Luke: And it was different but I made sure I ate it because I didn't want, because I thought would be so disrespectful to my mom if she spent all day, I'd be pissed if he didn't eat it, I'd be made, I'd be like dude, you just pushed the place aside when someone spent 8 hours making you a meal.

Me: No, I can definitely appreciate that. I think it's really important, especially I mean a meal like that that is tied so heavily to something that's important to them. That is sometimes part of the experience. I mean did you kinda get a sense of the Christmas traditions or was it just the meal?

Luke: They only talked about the meal I didn't get any other, I don't know if I asked or anything.

Me: Alright, were there any other things you encountered, were there any other activities you did, any customs you encountered, any other experiences that may have made you uncomfortable?

Luke: Um I think there were couple of like open protests we encountered. I think I told you about the one with the people dressed as skeletons with the pride flags.

Me: No.

Luke: Oh, I thought I told you about that, it was so bizarre. It was like we were in Copenhagen, but got to a weird part of it, and there was like a protest going on. And we were in an area where there was a lot of homeless people and there was, like, some sort of protest going on and there was these people dressed in like, Halloween skeleton outfits and had the gay pride flags, and were waving it around, and none of the Danes explained what it was. There was writing and one of the words was NATO, but I didn't know if it was the NATO we know, and they were protesting. And something about it made the homeless people angry and they started throwing food at them, and like the Danes were like, didn't really communicate but there was a point where I remember like pushing, I was with Megan and Amanda, so I remember pushing them away because they started coming near us and that was weird. And then there was another one that was like the last day. There was a Neo-Nazi protest in Copenhagen, and like, my own beliefs I'm like what the hell? But I wanted to see what was going on cause like, any time, and like it turned violent, like we had to run yea, it was weird, but it was cool at the same time. They like pushed the police, like they wanted to go one way and the police wouldn't let them so they went back at the police and that's when we ran, and we heard the dogs go loose yea.

Me: Um that's really scary.

Luke: Yea kinda, I don't know, I thought it was kinda different but yea, those were like the two experiences that were really different. The one, I was uncomfortable with the homeless people one, because I don't like being touched, but at the same time I was uncomfortable

with the fact they were touching the girls and that's why I pushed the girls away. And then the other one I was like, what the heck. This is crazy. But I wasn't uncomfortable with the second one.

Me: Um, that is really crazy. Have you ever seen anything like that in a city over here?

Luke: Never, that's why it was so weird.

Me: So how did you handle that?

Luke: Um, the one we were able to get on the bus. That's when they were getting touchy and the bus came like, right then and the second one, we just ran. I took a selfie with the Neo-Nazis.

Me: Thanks Luke.

Luke: Do you want to see it?

Me: Not now, I'm good, so...

Luke: I'm going to show it to you.

Me: Fine we'll take a look at this picture.

Luke: Look, that's me and that's the Neo-Nazis.

Me: Ok, so they're in the background, you're not like...

Luke: Yea, the police.

Me: Huddling around them.

Luke: No, I wouldn't have done that.

Me: So, it's just a selfie and back in the background,

Luke: Yea that's when they were just hate speechin' it. I didn't like, role up to a Neo-Nazi and be like, "Yo bro, do you want to take a selfie?"

Me: Um, what are some of the things that you experienced over there, any activities, or customs, or experiences, that kinda seem most comfortable to you while we're there, or did you find, not find comfort in, but were you very comfortable doing?

Luke: We did, I mean, with the home stuff, I was very comfortable with his family and then we did a ton of Copenhagen. We spent a lot of time in Copenhagen, and I was like comfortable with that. Like, I was comfortable walking around the city. That's where like, I'm going for school and I just love the city. And like we'll go, I'll go with friends or my uncle lives down in the city, so I'll just walk around with my uncle so I was really comfortable and really happy just walking around and seeing everything. And then in terms of like school I adapted quick to their scheduling. I mean they have so many breaks which just makes it easier too.

Me: Tell me about that. Tell me about what their school system is like. I know you said that the periods were long, but what did you think of some of the methods of teaching you saw? 'Cause like, we saw class really similar to how they run the classes in general. What did you think?

Luke: I mean I think it's pretty similar to what we do in some ways to what we do here. I mean, it's a lot of lecture, and then I think the ways they incorporated the class, I mean, they do more open discussion and I felt like that might have been just because we were there.

Me: I'd say that's honestly how it is.

Luke: I mean that was the one thing I noticed that it was most of time a conversation between the teacher and the students. Whereas here, a lecture is like you teach, and I sit and do a packet or I write notes that's like how it is here. But they almost seem to have like, a

bounceback way of teaching. Like we're going to feed off each other here, and then, like, what was the other part of the question?

Me: Um what, just what about the school in general. What were your thoughts regarding school in general?

Luke: And I just like, just like the freedom that they had. The fact that they can just walk to the mall for lunch. Oh you're about to like, reign loose, and that kinda speaks to the whole country.

Me: What do you mean?

Luke: I mean like in the fact that they are so much more trusting. That things are so much more, safer, that they can trust to see their students are to going to go off campus and that one, they're going to be safe and two, they're going to come back like, we could never do that here.

Me: Why couldn't we do that here?

Luke: That's a good question. First of all, it might be like respect, like respecting authorities. Like I have my own issues with that, but here there's no way you can be like "Hey, you, for lunch, you can now go to a restaurant," and trust that they would come back.

Me: You think some of them wouldn't come back?

Luke: No, half of them wouldn't come back. I mean, I'm speaking like, half of the senior class can't even stay in school for a whole day.

Me: Yea, that's true. Well, where does that come from?

Luke: Americans feel entitled. We, I don't know what else to say. Yea, I really don't know. It's an observance, but I don't know where it comes from. And what's the solution?

Me: Did you see that anywhere else outside of school? Did you see that level of freedom at that level?

Luke: Like they'd be like, "Oh we're having people over for the night", and their parents would just leave. My mom would never, I mean she might, but she'd have a million questions, like, "What are you going to do?" Just like stuff like that. Or like, as a kid, as an 18-year old, being able to go to all different parts of the city, like when I go to the city, I know like, I'm pretty familiar with the city because I have family so I grew up going to them, and I'm going to Temple next year, so I'm like, a lot of stuff in terms of like, knowing where things are. Like my uncle and I talked about it. But there they can go wherever in the city and know they're going to be safe, as like, 18 year olds, it's crazy.

Me: Did you feel prepared for that going over?

Luke: I kind of figured they were going to have a different level of like, independence. I don't even know where my idea came from. Maybe from the way they acted with us on field trips, but I did have an idea that they were going to have like a different level of independence than we do. I think it's also like a different level of maturity than we do in like the way they know how to handle different things. Like my partner knew right away what to do in like the time we were in that square when the Neo-Nazis went crazy. He knew what right to do, like we're going to go down this side street, then this side street, he knew what right to do 'cause we had an end goal, but he was able to figure out through side streets how to get there and then.

Me: So that's kind of interesting. I mean, I think it's like that he can figure out what to do, he knows what to do in that situation but not necessarily because he's been trained to handle

the situation if you see a protest but do you think getting that much freedom helps you navigate the world or is that just him as a person?

Luke: Um, no I don't think it was him as a person, I just think they have that level of freedom like, almost being forced to figure things out for yourself. I still think it was crazy going down side streets. I can't do that in West Chester.

Me: It's hard, it's definitely hard. So when we were over there you talked a little about what it was like living in your partner's home, but what takeaways did you get from that experience of being in someone else's home? The positive takeaways, the negative takeaways, what did you come away from that experience having gained?

Luke: I really just think different worldviews, again going back to that understanding that there isn't only my way of doing things, that there's so many ways of doing life. And there's so many similarities with the way the family interacted, or the way they connected. They still had very similar ways of doing things. Even to the fact of his dad stays at home and my dad works all the time, like I don't see my dad as much as I should. He's always traveling or he's, I mean doing his job, like stuff like that. Like just getting just that different perspective of not only an international thing, but how other families do things, no matter where our locations are.

Me: Can see that applying to anything to anything in your life in the future?

Luke: I just think just being more accepting of other people, like realizing like, well this is what I think and this is the way it should be. You kinda have to lend to the opposite view to like, the different way, 'cause you just end up cluttered up in your own space if you don't consider another person's shoes or walk in it.

Me: That's a really interesting point. I like that, cluttered in another person's space.

Luke: You just end up in your own box. You don't extend out of your own comfort zone. You never grow if you don't think in another person's life or another person's perspective.

Me: So how would you have approached that? Assume you haven't met your partner yet, and you get a description of this family: dad stays at home mom is the one that works. You think of some of the other characteristics of that family home and the lifestyle in the house, so this is before you applied into the exchange. How do you view that? Like Luke a year ago?

Luke: I do consider myself a pretty laid back person. I'd be like, oh that's different, like dad stays at home, not mom. I mean that's just kinda like engrained almost in our minds. I don't really know, but I think that's true whenever you think a parent stays at home, you would automatically think, oh that's the mom. So like I think that would be the only thing that sticks out: Dad stays at home. I think what his dad did, was he stayed at home and then in the summer time he was a scuba instructor in Thailand, yea, that's what his job was.

Me: That's really interesting, so his dad was gone for a couple months?

Luke: Yea, he was there for weeks at a time, but I think sometimes they would vacation there with him. But I think that would be the only thing that would stick out in my mind. That dad stayed home. That's different, because I really don't know or have heard of anybody that's a stay at home dad.

Me: So when you're thinking of that, obviously that's something that struck you and something you paid attention to, something you zoned in on. Does it still have the same kind of like, yea it's different, or is it something that you're not really thinking about?

Luke: Then or now?

Me: Now.

Luke: Um, I don't really think about it.

Me: Having been in that experience?

Luke: Yea having been in that experience, like I mean, it's just a dad and mom. It's not really that big of deal. I mean, I've never had a stay at home parent, so like I guess it was a little interesting how it was to have a stay at home parent, just like the dad was very structured making sure the kids got everywhere, making sure the house was clean, and the table's set. That's the type of thing my mom does, but she's a guidance counselor so she has shorter hours, like she's on school hours, so that was just kinda interesting to see. Like, oh dad's picking you up everywhere, usually that's my mom.

Me: So let's say you get to Temple next year, and you get your roommate, and that's the first thing your roommate says, my dad's a stay at home dad.

Luke: I'm not even going to think about it.

Me: Not going to think about it.

Luke: No.

Me: On to the next question?

Luke: That was really just a small thing that like, was a difference that I had never lived under. Like a stay at home parent thing, just the one thing I could think of.

Me: Were there any other big differences over there that going into the experience you may have thought one way, and at the end of this experience you thought differently about something?

Luke: I think through a lot of interactions with my partner. When he came, my family was in a weird spot for a guest to come. My little sister had a really big health scare, like in terms of she so my family was in a weird place, so I was doing more than I normally do. I was still applying to college and making sure my family is ok, so it was like, sometimes we didn't always get along super well, but I learned it wasn't really him. 'Cause when I got over there we were cool with each other, we got along, like we're very different people, but still found our common ground, so I think really that's the one thing. Going over there I was a little nervous because I was unsure like, what if we don't get along, but I don't think we ever, it was never him, or us it was always the other stuff, so I was nervous going over there. Like, what's this going to be like 'cause I was like thinking he did do stuff so differently at my house what is his family going to be like? And then when I got there it was fine.

Me: Well what made it fine?

Luke: I think it was so many accommodations. Like different like I could just lay back there, like I didn't have anything to worry about. Like when he was here, there was just a lot going on when he was here, that was kind of hard. That impacted the experience.

Me: So going over there it was almost like you're getting used to a person for the first time?

Luke: Yea and then it worked out.

Me: When did you feel comfortable to say like, "Alright, this is working out?"

Luke: Like day two or three, I was like ok, 'cause I was really conscious of it I was really nervous. I remember rolling up to the school and was like what is going to happen?

Me: Was anything of those first two days that happened specifically that made you feel more comfortable?

Luke: I think I immediately got a sense of their laid back, like even down to like, after I got in here I started typing up a to do list. I've gotta go get my sister, then I've gotta do this, I've gotta run to the store and get this. He'd get home from school and be like, "Yea we might do this," and I was like I vibe with that. I like this, we might do this. Like we talked a lot about that in the meetings leading up, but seriously, like I sat here and typed up a to do list like I have to do this this and this or I'll forget.

Me: Yea, like their lifestyle is so much, like it seems great they definitely seem less stressed in a lot of ways, and it sounds like that's what you're getting from your partner. Now did you have, I know that some of the people talked about the trouble with scheduling, and the lack of scheduling. Did you have any issue with that?

Luke: No, like one I'm late to everything so I didn't have an issue with that. That was an easy part which was funny because with my partner, as much as I think that was just the Danish in him, like we might do this, but he was very structured, like in terms of time oriented. He always woke me up before we needed to leave, like way before we needed to leave. We had to build in time to watch tv, meanwhile here I'm getting up ten minutes before I should be and rolling up just as like the bell rings, but literally he would build in almost like we had 10 to 15 minutes to get ready. Then we'd have half hour to chill and he would wake me up then. I'd be like, "I should be sleeping."

Me: What would you guys do?

Luke: Well his parents, his dad always had breakfast made. I came downstairs, and again I'm kind of a picky eater, so I told him I'd eat fruit, like an orange or grapefruit every day, and I'd go downstairs and it'd be like sliced up, table perfectly set table, right there.

Me: That's pretty nice.

Luke: It was really nice, but my breakfast is scarfing cereal down my throat as I'm driving here.

Me: So did everybody sit down at the table to eat breakfast?

Luke: No they didn't but you can tell individually they would all sit down. But it wasn't like all at the same time.

Me: So it wasn't like at the dinner time?

Luke: Yea.

Me: Ok so did any have any did any of your prior experiences have any influence on your time in Denmark? Like any of your travel experiences, being at school, the way your family is, did that maybe, can you look back maybe and say impacted, maybe positively or negatively, your ability to go through the exchange?

Luke: I think the only really experience that would have affected going to Denmark would have been the time in the States, 'cause I never had another experience, I mean it was always traveling with my family like we would go to this city or this part of the states just to see this or to hang out here.

Me: Well did that set up any expectations going over to Denmark?

Luke: I think the only one I can think of was, we've done west coast stuff, and I've just noticed there's a difference between the way the east coast does stuff and the way the west coast

does stuff. So I think there was a piece of my head that was like, oh if the east and west side of the same country do things different, even though there's thousands of miles in between, how different is it going to be when I go across an ocean? I think I was right in that sense.

Me: So you felt a little prepared for the fact that things were going to be different?

Luke: Not prepared as much as expecting it. I wasn't like, "This is how their lifestyle is going to be and I'm ready for it." It was more like, it's going to be different and you'll have things to get used to.

Me: What do you think is key then getting used to it, if you're not prepared for it, just take it openly, how do you do that?

Luke: I think that's my own personal mindset, honestly.

Me: Well how did you do that?

Luke: Uh, kinda follow his leads. See how he lived his life, then slowly adapt into it. I think towards the second half of the trip I had my way of living, in terms of oh yea, we might do this, but at this time I'm gonna go for a walk, or I'm gonna go for a bike ride or stuff like that. I think going into it open, observe, then create your own way.

Me: But none of those differences caused any type of discomfort?

Luke: No.

Me: So that's really unique. You had this open mindset, you experienced those differences, you experienced with an open mindset. Do you have any thoughts, of any sort, did you have to, and not to say it wasn't uncomfortable, did you have to process any differences, think about differences as you encounter them? Or was it just you are just so open that...?

Luke: I think the one time I'd get annoyed would be sometimes when we were in Copenhagen, we'd take the long way, and I'd be like, "Why do I gotta walk this long when we coulda just walked a couple blocks?" But they wouldn't like fully think through what they were going to do even though we kinda knew what we were going to do. And then we would end up in differ parts and that was the only time they wouldn't think through and they'd just kinda go with it. So at times I was like, "Could you guys plan a little bit?" like I'm all for exploring the city, but there's gotta be a point when we're like, "Yea, we're doing this." Does that make sense?

Me: Yea it does. So why did you feel that way? That you had to have a little bit more of a plan, a little bit more direction?

Luke: Yea, I guess direction would be, I don't really know I just guess.

Me: Was there something you wanted to see? Something you wanted to do?

Luke: Not necessarily. I guess that was really the only thing that frustrated me. I was like, I do like more of the journey, not the destination thing. I do like that more, but there was a point where I was like, alright, are we really doing this? I guess there was too many detours, do we really need to go through 3 shops now, like as a group? For some reason everyone wanted to be as a group. Like I've got no problem going off with my partner.

Me: So frustration was being together with everybody?

Luke: No, no, not at all, I just think there's, I don't know if I'm communicating my point. Like there's just times where like, too much all over the place, that's what I'm trying to say, like does that make sense?

Me: Yea it does, it definitely does. Have you, do you think, I know you say you're a pretty open person, has this trip really had any influence on attitude you might have with multicultural elements such as politics, or religion, or about pop culture, but does that have an influence on your attitudes towards politics, religion, pop-culture, or anything of that sort?

Luke: I think it really goes back to that idea that this isn't the only way of doing things. Like I think that's really as I go more places, as I meet more people from across the globe, like it all just lends into that you are not the only person, and your way of doing things is not the only way. And then it kinda all lends into that stuff specifically politics and religion, and opposing a different person's point of view. Like regardless if you're Christian or Jewish, Democrat or Republican, like you can actually, I think when you live a different life, you're actually able to understand an opposing person more, if that makes sense.

Me: Yea, it does make sense.

Luke: When you've been more places and you've met more people, you're more able to understand others.

Me: What does that understanding do for you then?

Luke: Become more accepting, become more open, become more worldly. Really this experience makes you more worldly.

Me: Did this experience make you more worldly, do you feel?

Luke: Yea, worldly for sure, I mean in terms of the physical traveling, my passport is stamped and says this, but also in terms of your mindset. Even though it was only a small portion of my life, I think I understand a lot more even in my interactions here, with that person, even though we both go to the same school and live a different life than I do, it doesn't make you any less or any more than me.

Me: Is that something that you've thought about before the exchange?

Luke: Yea, a little bit, I think I knew that there was going to be differences and hopefully you would become more aware, well not aware, but more cool with differences.

Me: Ok, what then do you think are the biggest takeaways that you have from this whole experience? You mentioned being more worldly, what did you, as Luke, get from this that you feel you didn't have beforehand. Or what may change and again some things positive and some things negative, and how do you feel that had an effect on you? What did bring home from this whole experience?

Luke: I mean I think the biggest one was the whole worldly name, and then of course you got the experience of going to a whole other country with like school and that. Like that's pretty dope. And then like, even friendships. I got a couple of really good friendships on the Danish side and on the American side. Like people I still talk to now that I didn't talk to before the exchange, like that that was cool and then I don't really know what else.

Me: Well, so actually then, you bring up an interesting point with the friendships. So with these people for 10 days basically.

Luke: Yea, and 10 days doesn't seem that long, but we're kinda crammed together for ten days. Like everyone wants to, when the Danes were in the states, we all wanted to give them the full experience. Like I went out with people I wouldn't have gone out with because oh, then the Danes will be together and then we'll be together and they'll experience

something new. And then try to reverse it when we were in Denmark, like it just kind of like gives them the full experiences through that you're meeting so many people.

Me: Why do you think that can occur in 10 days?

Luke: I mean you're spending so much time with people, and then through that I mean if you just look on the American side, like I spent so much time with people that like, oh I might know their face or I might know their name, but like, we wouldn't talk because we're in different grades, like different groups, or stuff like that. Then you kinda slowly realize like oh, we vibe. Like oh, we have this in common, or we have that in common, or like you live really close to me, like stuff like that. You're kinda slowly realizing small strands.

Me: And build on that?

Luke: Yea.

Me: So then, what about this exchange, again its only 10 days, what about this exchange do you feel allowed you to encounter that? Or to develop those feelings? And could anything have been done to maybe strengthen these feelings?

Luke: Wait, could you say that, like simpler?

Me: Yea sorry.

Luke: It's kinda wordy.

Me: Yea, it is wordy, you're my first interview so I'm getting used to this

Luke: Oh really?

Me: Yea. So a couple things have come from this so far in this interview. You've talked about feeling worldly or you talked about making these connections where you are able to experience differences for the fact that they were different, but not have like, a judgment such as with your partner's dad staying home. You know you talked about developing these friendships in a very close period of time. The exchange is only 10 days, and that's a lot really in ten days. What about the whole experience do you think really allows you to develop those feelings, or develop this attitude?

Luke: I understand now. I think it's in a way, I kinda talk about things, but in a lot of ways we're thrown in to another lifestyle. Like you get off the plane and you're put with this person and you start out being that person's shadow. And from there you develop and I think it's a lot of being thrown into a situation, and then from there you have to make the most of it.

Me: What do you mean make the most of it?

Luke: You have to take that lifestyle and I mean, I guess you can pick like, cherry pick from both lifestyles and see how you're gonna go about. Like I do think we are, like all of a sudden, I mean willingly put into this different situation. You just have to learn how to do it their way or adapt. Like I think that's really where, personally for me I think that's the coolest part 'cause you, I mean I did face some adversity with those two situations, that you are not comfortable, at the same time you face differences in like how people interact and how you travel about the way kids interact with their parents. The way parents parent, like you're just kind of thrown into it and you have to live it.

Me: Does that living it have a different effect than if we had sat you down in class and not had the exchange, and just had a class on cultural differences?

Luke: No, not at all

Me: Why?

Luke: Well first of all, I believe like pretty strongly that as much as you like learn a lot in school I can think that education is in a way 50/50. Like you should learn in a classroom setting. School is so important, but at the same time you have to learn on your way in the world, because the real world is not just book smart, you have to be street smart in order to survive. You have to be able to interact with people. You have to be able to carry out conversations, 'cause I mean, if you're not, I don't know, socially acceptable, like if you're not able to communicate with the person now, especially in today's age, I don't believe you'll ever be as successful as you can be. Like I just like social skills are so important now, and I think you learn a lot of like, social skills and in terms of that, that wouldn't be the same as if you were to sit us down in the classroom and say alright, "Denmark lifestyle: bullet point hygge." It's not the same as you're not actually experiencing that hygge. It's just learning about it and experiencing it are two different things.

Me: I guess this is the question. Can you just elaborate on that last point again? You know, you said learning and experience are two different things. What makes them so different?

Luke: Because I think one, it goes like, when you learn just go straight to your mind. That's the only real part that is affected by that, because you're sitting down, you are looking at a whiteboard, or listening to the teacher. It's not really directly affecting you. Like you're taking it in, but are you really taking it in? Where when you're experiencing or forced to experience something, you're fully taking it in. You are in the moment. You have to do this, or not have to, but you're doing this.

Me: What happens if you don't?

Luke: I mean, you're not going to have a good time, you're wasting an experience, but also \$1900.

Me: That's true, that's a lot of money. How do you navigate through the week if you don't feel that you're, I don't know, really taking that in then.

Luke: Honestly, I think you're being straight up stupid.

Me: That's fair.

Luke: But I don't really know how else to put it.

Me: That's fine, I think that's really good. Would you go through the whole year again?

Luke: What do you mean? The experience again?

Me: The whole experience, exchange, would you do it again?

Luke: Yea, I'd do it again.

Me: Why?

Luke: I just think there's a lot of memories I got out of it. Just from weird experiences like the ones that I said, or down to the experiences of just hanging out with Danes. Hanging out having like cookouts, hanging out with Americans, like it was just fun. You're constantly with good people it's a good feeling.

Me: Last question, I promise. In the fall you're going to be at college, a completely different experience from being here in high school. Is there anything from being in the exchange, that that you feel will help you with that transition?

Luke: I got a good answer to this, you'll like this. I think so, yea I really do cause it's like, on a much smaller scale I feel like with Denmark, because like, as much as you're like, thrown

into the new lifestyle for 10 days, when I, and then I come back, to like my space, then it comes back to again like being on an experience in a totally new environment. Being on my own and having to force with that. Like I'll have a precursor, like a precedent that I've lived through. And I'll like, realize in the end like, oh you can do this. Like it's really not as hard as your head tells you it is. Like you're gonna adapt quicker than you'd expect and you can do it without mom and dad. And I know that I can do it without mom and dad, like at the same time, like you I guess using them as the idea like, a safety. You can do it without something to fall back on. And in the end you can have a good time and hopefully be successful with it.

Me: So create a little bit sense of independence in you, is that what you're saying?

Luke: Yea.

Me: Well that's awesome, um, any last comments?

Luke: I'm good if you're good.

Me: Alright, that's fine.

Luke: Alright.

Me: Man of few words. Luke thank you very much

Appendix L: Bari Interview

- Me:** So I've got Bari here. Alright Bari, like I said, just like the group sessions, no one's going to hear this other than my advisor and myself and possibly a second advisor. Um, the first thing, tell me about your experience in Denmark, just general impressions. Give me a general overview to start.
- Bari:** I've never left the country before so it was definitely different. Everything seemed, the buildings seemed smaller and cleaner and more well taken care of. And when you're out in the streets of Copenhagen it was different from Philly. Like you don't see people who seem like they don't have homes or like, here you could be walking down the street walking under the bridges and you know just on the side there's a lot of people. It was kind of nice to see everyone was taken care of from what I saw, but it was just so nice. And obviously they weren't open right away but they were all welcoming and it was just very clean and you know organized I guess.
- Me:** So you enjoyed it?
- Bari:** Yeah.
- Me:** Overall?
- Bari:** I loved it.
- Me:** What was your favorite part?
- Bari:** Um probably going into the city on that 1st Saturday. We just got there because I didn't know what to expect. I know it's going to be great, but I wasn't expecting the, the structure that I saw and everyone just, it was sunny so everyone was out. Everyone was happy.
- Me:** Yeah everybody was out that day.
- Bari:** Yeah
- Me:** That was really cool. What did you guys do that day?
- Bari:** We went to New Harbor and we went on a canal tour. Yeah we just kind of walked around the city for the rest of the day went to that line of shops, and we went over and got street food somewhere. And it was just really, really fun, and we took a lot of public transportation which is something I'm just not used to.
- Me:** Yeah, what was that like?
- Bari:** It was different because I mean, here public transportation is definitely not what it is over there because more people rely on it there. Getting off the bus is such a rush because everyone wants to get a spot, and if you don't the bus just closed the door and leaves, so like, 10 of us would just stick together, like shove each other to get on.
- Me:** You guys held hands to get on?
- Bari:** Pretty much. It was kind of crazy. It was really nice and clean I mean everyone kind of relies on it which is something I kind of expected but didn't expect at the same time.
- Me:** Was it really different having to use it?
- Bari:** Yeah
- Me:** OK
- Bari:** Yeah it was weird not relying on, like if I wanted to go if I wanted to take him over to a friend's house, then I could just get my car and go, but over there you had to plan around which bus will be showing up, which bus you have to take, and everyone else would also

be trying to do that at the same time. So there was a lot of sometimes, delays and that day that happened it kind of threw everything off.

Me: That did kind of throw thing off. Do you use public transportation over here?

Bari: I use to take train every once in a while 'cause my brother goes to Jefferson in the city, so sometimes we'll take it to go up and visit him or to go to New York 'cause it's just easier to get there.

Me: So you're pretty confident going into it.

Bari: A little bit. The trains not so much the busses.

Me: Yeah and sometimes the buses. I think what's frustrating is sometimes where the buses would let you out next to one of those bike highways. And I remember the first time I wasn't used to that, so I stepped out of the bus and I had to be pulled back because bikes were zooming by which was a little different.

Bari: I feel the Danes did that too, which surprised me like they didn't think about it like they just stepped down and almost get hit.

Me: It's not something you're thinking about yeah those bikes they fly out of nowhere.

Bari: Yeah.

Me: So that's cool you guys went to new harbor, you did the canal tour, and all that. Anything else you did that first day?

Bari: No, just a lot of walking, just a lot of sightseeing, just the only thing that was really big was New Harbor everything else was just kind of walking along the streets.

Me: Just to kind of see everything?

Bari: Yeah.

Me: That's really cool.

Bari: It was really nice.

Me: So Bari what was your travel experience before going to Denmark?

Bari: Mainly just here up and down the East Coast I've gone all the way down to like the middle of Florida to the New England area. The only time I went out, the furthest I went was out West to California. Or just like, a cruise to the Caribbean, but nothing bigger than that. I mean I'm used to the planes 'cause I travel, like I said, up and down, like I go to Georgia every summer. And for soccer like just every weekend will be a new trip to somewhere different all the way down to Virginia or Florida so.

Me: So you've gone like, you've gotten out of this area a lot.

Bari: Yeah like it's not something like, I don't like staying here.

Me: Just haven't gotten out of the country much?

Bari: Yeah.

Me: Where in California did you go? Much different than it is here right?

Bari: Yeah very.

Me: Yeah what about the Caribbean? You did a cruise down there?

Bari: Yeah I went to the Bahamas.

Me: So how did the Bahamas, even San Diego, I mean both of those are two places that are different than his here. I've been to San Diego. I haven't been to the Bahamas. How did this experience of Denmark compare with going to the Bahamas or going to San Diego?

Bari: I saw a lot more of the culture.

Me: What do you mean?

Bari: So over in Denmark I mentioned like, when you travel on your own you kind of just stick to yourself and just staying in a hotel and just you do all the touristy stuff. But over in Denmark living with the families you're kind of pushed into basically being a Dane for the full 10 days and you kind of do what they do with how they get to school and what times they ate at what they ate. And I mean it was very interesting to see that 'cause when I went to the Bahamas it was you got off the boat you stayed at the beaches, and if you want to go to the restaurant you'd go and it wouldn't be like, I don't know, any different than how you live your normal life because you just stick yourself. But over there when I was out I had to ask about what I was ordering because it was more in a space that was very Danish, not really used to having people visiting since it was in the small area we weren't always in Copenhagen. Being in Copenhagen was easier because they're used to having tourists, but when we went to a restaurant out by where they lived, and off to the side of the water, and I had to ask what was on this menu. And when I got the sandwich it wasn't even a sandwich you eat with your hands, you had to cut the sandwich 'cause the toast on top was cut in half. Like the bottom is a full piece of bread and the bread on top was a cut in half so I had to eat a sandwich with a fork and knife so I wasn't expecting that.

Me: Is it a sandwich at that point?

Bari: I know! That's what I thought and I looked over at his dad who ordered the same thing and he was cutting it with a fork and knife, so I was like OK, this is what I'm doing. So that kind of opened me up to the culture a lot more by living with them and asking about everything they live with rather than just traveling to San Diego with my family and just staying with ourselves and staying away from the local people I guess.

Me: So you said you had to ask about different things was than just the general, "Hey I'm curious about this" or was that in line with maybe some things that you're trying to make sense of?

Bari: Both. I think I'm a very, Martin always told me how he enjoyed me as a partner because I'm so curious about things and he likes talking and teaching people about things as well. So when we were out I was always asking like, why is the sandwich not a sandwich, like how I would know it. And I would just have to ask what would be on it because they would do the curry sauce. Like everyone always wanted to do that because I always had to make sure what was going to be on the sandwich but not just that, it was whenever we were out in Copenhagen I was asking his mom who worked at that one big building in the middle of the city. I don't know if you saw it was the big brown one and it had the circle figures it was like their biggest building really, good for architectural I guess, really popular for it, and I'm not really sure where it was, but um I always asked about that because his mom was really proud of being able to work there because it's such a big success for the architecture there in Denmark. And I guess it's more modern in the way it's built in the inside and the walls are certain way so sound doesn't travel through so people working don't get distracted by people down the hall.

Me: Interesting

Bari: Yeah it was really cool going in there and they love telling me about it. And I was kind of wanting to know where I was, but at the same time I was generally curious why it was so big for them because we have skyscrapers and modern technology here everywhere basically.

- Me:** And so that's a different aspect to them I mean they have some pretty cool design elements as well. So what was it like being in the house of a family that is of a different culture than you?
- Bari:** It's kind of scary 'cause I didn't want to mess up.
- Me:** What do you mean?
- Bari:** Like they look at manners differently I guess. And they have different manners so I didn't want to be doing something and have them think, "well that's kind of rude of her" without me knowing it's rude because it could have been totally normal here. So it's kind of like a constant worry of what I was doing. I don't know if I was sitting out in the family room and they were trying to talk I didn't want it to seem like I was sitting in on their conversation even though they were in a totally different language. I didn't want to make it seem like I was trying to make them feel bad for talking in different language when I couldn't understand them, but I mean it was cool at the same time.
- Me:** Now when you said it was constant worry, was that a constant worry for the duration of the trip, is it something that you got over, or was it something that decreased or increased?
- Bari:** I got over it near the end probably, around the middle closer to the end I think. Closer to the end I'm totally comfortable. I felt like I totally belong there. Martin and I would come home from school, he would go to his room, I would go to my room we relax for a little while until we are ready to get back up and go out. So it was nice that it kind of went away and I also think it came from his parents, just being so welcoming and his mom bought me socks, and a book, and chocolates for when I got there. I just felt so at home after a while, but at first I didn't know what was right, what was wrong, but as I got used to it, it was nicer.
- Me:** So next year a student wants to go to Denmark and they call you. And let's say it's someone you know, "Bari I'm really nervous about being in someone else's home." What do you tell them so that maybe it's not that big of a deal for as long? How do you prepare for that?
- Bari:** I tell him I was worried too 'cause it's just a normal thing, but I'd also tell him to keep an open mind because that's the best thing you could do for yourself and going over there that's how I prepared for it. When they came over here, and when I went over there I didn't set any certain expectations for them because I never know people were saying Danes were stubborn. That's just how it really was, but I don't want to set that right before they got here because all I could think of was how stubborn they were being if they weren't being stubborn.
- Me:** OK so you went into it with a really open mind?
- Bari:** Yeah just kind of like let's welcome these people. And I mean from all the people, like I said with soccer you meet a lot of people from Britain and from Ireland. Like you meet those coaches and from those guys, they were always so nice and they have a certain humor so coming in to them I was like, oh maybe it'll be like that as well, like I just like meeting people from somewhere else, so I would just tell them to keep an open mind and kind of just let things be and be just as polite as possible and they'll welcome you back the same way.

- Me:** So I mean you said something interesting there with soccer, meeting people from various countries. I mean let's go on that for a little bit. How did maybe some of your private experiences such as that, I mean that you just mentioned, have an influence on you in Denmark? Or was that the only thing that did maybe have some type of influence.
- Bari:** It definitely helped a lot because I noticed even without being around them too much, my coach was British from my last 2 years. And I didn't notice a ton of cultural differences just because he was living here, but I was able to notice that even though they may seem not the same, I guess just because they're not American they're still people and they're still, they still like to joke around. They still have their own habits and have families that they go home to at the end of the day like we do. So it definitely made me feel better knowing that these people, the Danes coming over, weren't going to be stubborn people who only spoke Danish and only care about what happens at home. Like they wanted to come over here and see something new like I was looking forward to going over there.
- Me:** So having experience with your coaches helped you to be more open to what it would be like with the Danes?
- Bari:** Yeah.
- Me:** OK have any other experience you've had in the past somehow influenced your trip good or bad?
- Bari:** Not really 'cause like I said I've only ever been here, so I didn't have a lot of knowledge about people outside the country and other countries. So I just went into it kind of hoping for the best, and hoping that everyone is going to be as nice and as fun as I thought they were. And they were.
- Me:** And they were?
- Bari:** Yeah which is good.
- Me:** So it's all good?
- Bari:** Yeah
- Me:** Was there anything while you're over there that kind of caused some type of resistance in you, such as maybe something was either uncomfortable or confusing? Or caused you to step back and be like, "well what's going on here?" Did you experience anything of that sort?
- Bari:** Not exactly in the beginning but as the week went on and they started getting comfortable with us being there and we were getting comfortable being there. We still weren't as comfortable, or I wasn't as comfortable, just because I'm at home and I'm not with my family you know. But he got very comfortable having me around and so it seemed as though by the end of the week. Whereas when they were here we were so on top of where they were, what we were doing, how are we going to entertain them? Because we don't want them getting bored. But on the last day for me, I was left in Tivoli and I didn't know where he went. He didn't tell me he was leaving so I was kind of like, "Oh my gosh, what happened?" And it was like nothing when he came back. It was like nothing at all. He was just kind of fine with leaving me just because they grew up with that independence. So I was kind of taken aback that day when I was like, Oh I guess this is just that he was so comfortable to go without warning me. I was kind of worried I was like, I don't know how I'm gonna get back home because he had apparently left the park and you can't get into the park without money. But he didn't leave the park. Everyone else

thought he did. It was kind of like a little sense of panic on that last day with like, I don't know where my partner is.

Me: So how did you handle that?

Bari: I just kind of went along with the day. I mean, I was a little worried. I was asking the Danes to keep me updated about if they hear from him at all, but I just I found another group and they took me in. And they're like, we'll make sure you will get you home so I just went along with it as if everything was going to be fine by the end of the day, 'cause I knew that it was.

Me: So was there any animosity?

Bari: Define animosity.

Me: Were you angry with him?

Bari: A little bit yeah. 'Cause it was last day and I did want to spend it the best way we could. And I was asking to go to souvenir shops because we hadn't gotten to at all that week. And we kept passing right by them, kept passing right by them, and by the time I found them again they were all closed. So I found like one little thing in the Tivoli shops, so I was only able to buy for one person. My little brother wanted a sweatshirt, but I was able to get him one, but other than that the week was fine. Just that last day could have been a little better.

Me: Were there any activities or customs while you're over there, or cultural elements that you had to sit back and think about? Or that may have caused a bit of discomfort?

Bari: I don't think so. The group I hung out with the most we're very good with just keeping things very calm and the way that we would know them. I mean whenever we went to people's houses, it was just relaxing. We had ordered pizza one night, we went to Jakob's house and barbecue that one night. I mean we just kind of hung out like we would here. There was nothing too crazy or out of the ordinary that we noticed, and they didn't make us feel uncomfortable in any way.

Me: That's really good. So you did a lot of, you did the barbeque, Tivoli, and I guess Tivoli is a big tourist attraction. Do you feel that you got a chance to do enough of the touristy stuff while you were there?

Bari: Not really, no. Yeah so I don't mean to bash on my partner because he's really great.

Me: No no no, like I said, I mean I want you to be honest.

Bari: Yeah he was very into, I feel like he didn't want, even though he had someone who was a tourist, he didn't want to be a tourist. So like when they were here we went to the Magic Gardens. We walked them around Philly. We showed them what we had to show them here and in DC. And we let them see what they wanted to but over there I think the only real thing we saw was Tivoli and New Harbor. And we didn't go anywhere outside of really the city other than for dinner or something. But I would talk to Kristen and Julie and them and Kristopher was taking them to the museum, the Art Museum and he took them to some other Castle in Sweden. And he was taking them to all these cool places in Denmark, and I mean I was like, oh well we went to the city, and we went home and hung out you know.

Me: So did that affect your overall experience?

Bari: No, I think it was OK, because it wasn't exactly a tourist experience for Me. It was more like a living experience. So I just kind of kept my mind on that whereas like, if I could go

back and visit touristy spots, I would but for the time being I was like this is an exchange. I'm living with a Dane, this is how he does his day whereas he goes to school then comes home then goes to work but he wasn't working that week.

Me: So what if I told you before you signed up for this that any of those major features let's say you had an idea of what those major tourist attractions were, and before you signed up for this exchange, like it's, you'll have this experience but all those things you want to see you're not going to see.

Bari: I probably would have second guessed about coming because it is a lot of money. Well not a lot, but it is a lot to go and not see anything because like, when we went to Sweden, I was a little disappointed because we went and sat in this little triangle area for a while not figuring out what to do because they didn't know what to do. And we didn't know where we were. And after about 45 minutes of just standing there and arguing, the Danes were arguing about where we're going to go, we settled on going to this burger place. So we got a burger and then we went to the mall that they wanted to go to because it's the biggest mall over there, but in our heads we've got King of Prussia at home we could have done this back home.

Me: But did you have fun there?

Bari: I did. Everyone is kind of tired and grumpy because it was that Sunday so we had just come in Friday, went to Copenhagen Saturday, and then it was that Sunday that we went. But I still had fun because I mean even though it was just another mall, it was in Sweden.

Me: Alright so you're in Sweden?

Bari: Yeah.

Me: But what about with a group of people you were with.

Bari: I had fun with them. They were more they were fun. The Americans were kind of keeping it chill, but everybody was getting kind of crabby by the end of the day. But I couldn't find one person who was fine and like I'm just tired it was fine like that.

Me: So again, let's do another hypothetical situation someone signs up in the exchange and they're talking they're like, "I'm so excited. I get to see the round tower. I want to see the Louisiana museum. I want to see the Danish History Museum." And they list all the top tourist spots in Denmark and that's what they want to see- what do you say to them?

Bari: Is this before after they get to Denmark?

Me: This is before they're going to Denmark

Bari: I think I'd tell them to tell their partner what they want to do ahead of time 'cause I think I went I wasn't prepared because he didn't give me much about what he wanted to see when he was over here, so I was like ok, so I'm not going to come back and be like I want to see all these things because I didn't know how close they were and I didn't know what his parents were able to do for us, and how much we want to spend on public transportation. So I didn't really reach out, so I can't really blame him for not seeing a lot. But at the same time, I was you know, just genuinely do you want to go see something? But I definitely tell him to give their partners heads up, reach out and be like, "Hey. Did some research. I found these spots in Denmark and I was really wondering if they were possible for us to see?"

Me: Now what if this person gets back and says I didn't see any of those things and they're disappointed what do you say?

Bari: I'd tell him, that I give them this "you got to see Denmark and you got to see these Danes and think about all these friendships you made." Hopefully they made friendships.

Me: We'll assume that they did.

Bari: 'Cause when I was over there it just happened naturally that everyone became friends and I tell them you know you had a fun time with that because that's what made the trip fun was that we became friends by the end. And by the end it wasn't just like, oh let's get two other partners to hang out with our partners so it's not weird. It was, hey, so and so are doing this. Want to come over because you guys are getting along fine?

Me: Yeah I was very impressed with them the day in Tivoli, and how many of you guys were there and the fact that it wasn't like a couple of random or at least from our perspective it didn't seem like it was just a couple of random groups that happen to be there the same day. It seemed like everybody was there together.

Bari: Yeah I was texting the group chat and, what time you guys going? And we planned it out through the Americans and the Americans would communicate with the Danes. And the Danes had their own chat going on so everyone was able to meet up.

Me: I mean that's a pretty cool experience to have and I'm sure there's people that you probably didn't know before getting involved in the exchange. I mean kids from these schools. Obviously you didn't know the Danes.

Bari: Yeah no, even the kids from school I barely knew any of them. I mean the closest ones I was to were probably Amanda, Megan, Kerry, and Amy. And even then we weren't close. We all came from different friend groups. And then by the end, it was like, we were basically living together in Denmark and trying to get through a different country together.

Me: That's an interesting statement as well, "just trying to get through Denmark together." Like what does that mean?

Bari: Something that we've never done before, like traveling overseas. Like by the time we got to the airport it was a matter of were you guys ready for this flight? And are you going to make it through this flight? And some people, I mean going there I don't have anyone next to me but if I had a nice person placed next to me we probably would have been best friends by the end of that flight because it's 8 hours overnight together. And then we all went into a different country that none of us, I don't think any of us have been to Denmark, except for Michelle, but not even just going there. Going into these families we didn't know, so we're all kind of bonding over the idea of being nervous that first day going into these different families and then after that it was kind of like we all knew that we were American. We knew that we were kind of out of place there, so we all got together and became closer friends knowing that like, oh this is another person that I can like kind of relate to other than trying to find a Dane and be like talk about American things.

Me: So having that little familiarity with the other people in the exchange?

Bari: Not really knowing what's going to happen.

Me: So that was kind of comfort there to help you encounter that experience?

Bari: Yea.

Me: So then how was your experience different when you were doing things with other Americans around versus when other Americans weren't around?

- Bari:** We did a lot when other Americans were around, so that kind of overshadows what happened when they weren't, but it was more laid back while they weren't 'cause whenever we get groups together, the Danes are coming with the Danes trying to figure out things. And the Americans are kind of with the Americans, but when it's just me and him hanging out, and we took his dogs for a walk on the first day and it was kind of like me asking questions why the flags were kind of the thin ones.
- Me:** Yeah what's the answer to that?
- Bari:** If something special isn't happening then they fly the thinner ones. Then if something special is happening, they fly the bigger ones, like the royal birthdays then the bigger flag goes up.
- Me:** Did you see the stuff at the birthdays and the flags?
- Bari:** No I don't think so.
- Me:** If you got the restaurant sometimes the flags are used for birthday celebrations.
- Bari:** Do they have them on your table or something?
- Me:** Yeah, so every restaurant has flags available so you can always tell when it's someone's birthday because you see the flags on the table. And it's the only time they used the flags
- Bari:** That's so nice. They had a flag at their house actually.
- Me:** Do they really? That's not normal.
- Bari:** It's for someone's birthday in the house or like when they have an extended family member over that's having a birthday.
- Me:** So that's birthday.
- Bari:** Yeah and she said that when I was there she had it out every day. And I didn't notice till the end of the trip. I just thought they put it out every morning. Their neighbor came across and was like, "who's birthday has been going on for a whole week?" His mom had to explain that, "Oh no we have special visitor in." So I thought that was kind of sweet kind of nice
- Me:** Did you pick up on any other customs like that?
- Bari:** Um not really. Like, we went over this a lot when we were over there like, you don't see the Danish flag over there as much as you see the American flag over here. I mean that was just kind of like, I knew that going into it because whenever we have our meetings we kinda talked about it.
- Me:** That's cool. So going into this, before leaving Denmark, how would you kind of look at your level of openness to new experiences and being around people different attitudes different beliefs?
- Bari:** I was kind of excited for it but also nervous because I love finding new things and meeting new people so I was really excited to do this and that's why I signed up for it. In the beginning I was just thrilled, and I mean I knew like Kerry and Liz, and everyone from last year and meeting their Danes made me more excited because they were just genuinely nice people who always want to talk about something. So I was very open minded to meeting the people going into it, and just having a new experience somewhere I've never been before.
- Me:** Were there any activities or customs or things that you did, I know you mentioned being in the presence of other Americans sometimes, but were there any activities or customs that seem very familiar to you while you were there?

Bari: The amusement park. While we're going there, that's something we do in the summer. We all like, you know, a group of friends of mine would text each other and be like, "Oh do you want to go to Hershey for the day?" That's something that we do. Obviously it's not as accessible as there's was, but then just hanging out as friends when we went. And had that barbeque, and we have people over for pizza something like that we would do as well. Going to school and seeing everybody at school, that happens here. Just common things like that. Yeah, just the hanging out and going out with friends and trying to go do activities to pass time with friends it was all kind of the same.

Me: Did you pick up on any cultural differences just in the hanging out with people? I mean did you notice how Danish teenagers are? How the Danish families are? Or culture in general?

Bari: They're a lot more independent and mature I guess, if that makes sense. When we were out in the city it was up to them. Their moms didn't try and check in with them. They weren't asking people certain things like certain directions to go places. They knew everything because they had grown up just being able to go into the city without any problems. So like, getting under the bus going to these different places, they weren't scrambling to find different things to do. Whereas if you drop me in the middle of Philly, I would have no idea what was going on, and I'd probably be a little scared.

Me: So what's the difference? Why are they like that, versus why would you be scared being in Philly?

Bari: I feel like they have a lot more trust in each other. I don't know what the crime rate is, but if it's lower, that could be another thing. But just the fact that from a young age is that pressure is put on them. Like when we saw elementary schoolers riding their bikes to school in the morning. There were 8 year olds like two miles away from home on their bike on the side of the road.

Me: It's very different

Bari: Yes, it was really interesting. I feel like they just have that mature idea of what knowing what they're doing.

Me: Could you do that though if I dropped you in the middle of Philly?

Bari: I could probably figure out, but they seem just so comfortable with it right off the bat. I feel like over time I would pick up on it. Just right now, even though I'm 17 and they were 17. The difference was that right away they had already known it whereas I would have to.

Me: Kind of figure it out?

Bari: Yeah.

Me: I think the independence is very interesting because they, they didn't now, granted it's a better school than in some other areas, but those kids didn't necessarily seem to abuse that independence. And I don't know if it's just because they're so used to it that there's no reason to abuse it. What do you think about that?

Bari: They did take it very nicely whenever they were just left alone. They didn't go in a whole rampage like, "our parents aren't around!" It was kind of like, "OK, let's hang out. Let's go find some food to eat. We have to catch the bus at 4:15." They just easily went along with their day. They weren't trying to look for any trouble because nobody was going to know about it. They knew they didn't get into any trouble, so they just, I don't know, went

along as if an adult was there tagging along with them. And I think somebody said something when we were all hanging together as a group, 'cause every time that we go over somebody's house, the parents would disappear. You wouldn't know where they went you know they either went into their bedroom or they would leave the house, and I was like, "where's your parents?" and they would be like, "I don't know." I mean it was kind of interesting that it was that way that. When it was that Friday night when my partner had people over for pizza and his parents packed up and went to the movie theaters. They didn't wait for me to come over. They set up and just left whereas here, my mom would probably be walking around make sure everything was OK and it was just interesting.

Me: That is interesting. Was that weird?

Me: A little bit, yeah. 'Cause it's just another thing with the independence that the parents have the trust in the kids, and the kids had the trust in themselves that a mess won't be made. And when we were done with our pizza, everyone cleaned up everything, put the dishes away. It wasn't like a mess for him to come home to.

Me: Would your friends here clean up without your parents right there?

Bari: There's a few that might, but there's a few that are just messy and probably help their parents clean up after them. It's a really mean thing to say, but I'm one of those people that tries to clean up and put my plate away.

Me: No but that's like a big thing, like you say right there like at home, their parents would clean up for them, like they're not going to do that.

Bari: Because they wouldn't leave the house.

Me: Right

Bari: But it was just funny because somebody was like, "I swear just like Danish parents just like disappear whenever people start coming over." And it was true. It was kind of weird.

Me: Then what's the interaction home like with your partner and his family, and with you there as well?

Bari: There was definitely a separation, so whenever I was in the room it would be that or whenever we were together they were speaking either in Danish, or if it was in English was focused on me and how I was doing and how what I liked about the day. And then they break off into Danish, and it wasn't a rude thing. It was just if they're talking to each other I didn't have to be involved, you know? It was like plans for next day and his mom would, whenever he and his dad would talk, she would look after the side and be like, "don't worry they're just talking about the pizza they're having." So she did keep me involved but there was that kind of separation. It wasn't like everyone could talk about one thing because I didn't know about everything it was kind of like their English talking to Me or it was Danish talking about whatever they had to talk about.

Me: Did that bother you?

Bari: Not at all.

Me: That's good.

Bari: Especially because she like, apologized every once in a while. Like she didn't need to. I kept telling her don't worry about it but I mean if they're talking about his schooling or his work then I don't need to be involved because that's not something I'm there for.

Me: Was their family dynamic similar to what you experienced at home? Or was it different?

Bari: It was very much like what I experienced at home. Mine is this crazy schedules that I have I mean his parents were very nice. Both his mom and dad were at home at the same time just like mine are, but he didn't have an older brother who was worried about getting his car up to college. And my younger brother who has to go to the certain school functions or out with his friends and may try to go from rugby to a friend's house to dinner with somebody you know. It was kind of like everyone was together. Everyone was kind of like there at the same time. It wasn't like his mom asking where he's going to work and you have to leave at this time tomorrow. It was kind of in a moment.

Me: In the moment?

Bari: Yeah

Me: Is that a general Danish trait, or is that their family?

Bari: It seemed like a general Danish trait.

Me: How so?

Bari: Every time, no matter where we were, who we were with, we would go over to other families' houses, and at the time nobody is worried about tomorrow, and what time do I have to get up? And where do you have to be? You know, even when I watched other parents talk to their kids, it was kind of like, "Oh what are you guys going to do right now? Not like, "Oh, but be done by 10, because you have to get up tomorrow." You know? So that was kind of like a thing I noticed.

Me: What did you think about that?

Bari: It was nice 'cause it's not as stressful I guess. 'Cause like I can assure you as soon as I get home my mom is going to be like, "Do you have rugby tomorrow? We have to go get your nails done tomorrow. We have to make your Gram dinner after that." But over there, it was like a "Welcome home do you need to relax? I can make you tea." Like the first night I got there, we had tea with his family.

Me: That's nice. That's really relaxing.

Bari: I was like wow, it's a Friday in the middle afternoon and you guys can sit down for tea. It's not something I'm used to.

Me: That's completely different. Did you find that other people were having a similar experience in other homes? Did you talk to other people in the program?

Bari: You probably know about one girl who had a really rough?

Me: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Bari: When I talk to people, like her definitely not, because that was just a totally different family, and it didn't seem like they had a lot of bonding time together. It was just like, when they went home their parents were doing their thing and the students were doing their's. I mean every once in a while you met a student who says I don't get to do much with this family, or she keeps pulling me out of the house, and I've been able to spend a lot of time, but for the most part 9 out of 10 people I talked to had a nice experience of when you went home you could spend time with the family. It wasn't rushed or stressed out at all. And I think everyone really kind of enjoyed that feeling.

Me: Did it seem like that was being put on for you guys because you were the guest?

Bari: Slightly.

Me: Slightly which way?

- Bari:** Slightly but put on because I was the guest because she was mentioning like we would have breakfast every morning. We would have pancakes or croissant or some kind of bread, and she had mentioned how when I was not there that's not how it would be. She would not prepare that breakfast for his dad her and for me and him to eat it just kind of be like a grab and go like we do here. So I do think they put on some kind of like, little family get-together and everyone loves to hang out with each other, but I feel like when I do leave he doesn't spend a lot of time. He works a lot and he told me a lot about it when I was over there that he's modeling and he's trying to open up these clubs and venues and stuff and I don't know what he does or how he gets involved in that.
- Me:** Wait what does he do?
- Bari:** When I was over there he's talking about new club that he was opening.
- Me:** In the city?
- Bari:** Yeah do you remember that big pink building?
- Me:** Bari of all the buildings in Copenhagen!
- Bari:** It was the only pink building!
- Me:** The only pink building!
- Bari:** I think it was like a movie theater.
- Me:** There's two pink buildings in Nyhavn.
- Bari:** See if you could remember two pink buildings, you could probably remember one big pink building!
- Me:** I don't.
- Bari:** Well there's a pink building. It was a movie theater and that's the only reason I recognized it, because I was like, "What is that?" But it's somewhere over there. It was in the city though. He does stuff like that and from what I see, it doesn't look like he's ever home when I'm not there, but as soon as I get there, it was that they spent dinner and breakfast every other time together. So I do think it was a little...
- Me:** That's very grown-up of him to open up a club.
- Bari:** I know I was kind of surprised.
- Me:** But maybe again, that's kind of like that independence factor that they have over there.
- Bari:** I mean over there he's at the age where he can work in that industry whereas over here you have to take that three-hour long test just to be a waiter.
- Me:** What is it the Tips?
- Bari:** I don't know it's something weird.
- Me:** To be able to serve.
- Bari:** Yeah. I don't know, but it takes a while and you have to be 18 to do it.
- Me:** It's different.
- Bari:** Independence again.
- Me:** It is honestly that independence. Now has this trip, I mean did you have any exposure to like some multicultural elements just like politics, Danish religion pop culture etc.?
- Bari:** A little bit, but I don't really get involved in politics here, and I should because I'm almost 18. I don't really focus a lot on it, so whenever they were trying to talk about it I was trying to stay off to the side. It wasn't a one on one thing between my partner and I, it was more when Brendan was around because he's big into politics, and so is his partner and my partner knew some things about it as well. But whenever his family would talk

about it, it would kind of be amongst themselves only because me being American there it would kind of come up, but every other time I didn't really involve myself with it. But it did come up briefly. It wasn't a big thing over the trip. It's just like, you know somehow something would come up and it would last for maybe 10-minutes tops and then they would kind of move on. Uh the religion I got involved in a little bit, like not like involved but he was telling me about it when I was talking about the flags and he was telling me about how the cross came to be there. It was something I don't remember what it was but you know I did learn a little bit about it. But it wasn't a talk and it didn't cause any controversy I guess. But it was more just like, I want to learn about how the government here works, how your religion works, and apparently a lot of people are atheist over there is what he told me.

Me: Yeah it's different.

Bari: It was kind of cool learning about it. But it wasn't anything like I was trying to spark, nobody was trying to spark arguments.

Me: No not necessarily, just exposure to it.

Bari: Yeah just kind of talking about it and what they knew about over here.

Me: What about pop culture?

Bari: Yeah they showed us, do you mean like music and stuff? They did show us a lot of their music.

Me: Really? What did you think?

Bari: it was really interesting. Really upbeat. Here you get things are really smoothly backed slow beat type things, but I feel like every song they showed us, it was always something that would be played at somebody's birthday party, or nothing that you like, this big concert, nothing you could just sit and listen to.

Me: That's kind of opposite to their culture of relaxation

Bari: I know. You'd think, but I don't know if it was just because being young people music they go out every weekend and listen to that kind of stuff, but yeah it was kind of weird.

Me: Is there, do any of the elements influence your attitudes towards not just politics, religion, pop culture, but those and other multi-cultural elements, not that you can actually change like your religious beliefs, but made you think about politics, religion pop culture, etc. differently?

Bari: Leaving here I know there's other cultures, other countries, other beliefs, but I didn't really think how much of a difference it would be. Like we all have our beliefs here, but they have their own beliefs over there too, like, not everyone thinks just that we think. They think different things, so it did kind of change my perspective only to open up my mind a little bit more.

Me: What do you mean?

Bari: It made me realize that everyone is different and that everyone has different lives and we may only be a couple 100,000 miles from them, but what we believe in, what they believe, might be completely different from them, and how we live and how they live is run differently, and it's just kind of interesting to learn that stuff.

Me: So let me ask you two questions then. So being there opened your eyes to that that people are different. First question is you sit in classes at school where we talk about different cultures if you took Afro-Asian history in 9th grade, and then Western-Civ in

10th grade, I mean you're talking about different cultures. Do you take contemporary issues?

Bari: No

Me: That would have been another one, but even like sociology you'll talk about different things. What's the difference in experience in that multicultural learning in class versus what you experience being in Denmark?

Bari: I feel like when I'm in class, I'm just kind of taking it in to prepare for my next test. I'm just kind of like, "Oh they do this, I need to remember that." You know, just you get an idea of what goes on, but you don't really notice how and when and where it all happens. Meanwhile when I'm over in Denmark, you see the different churches, they have you see people out on the streets you know like, you just know that everyone else thinks different things just like when you're in the classroom you're just like, "Oh that's cool you told me that." But over there you can see it and you can be involved in it. I guess involvement is probably the biggest piece.

Me: Why do you think that's so important?

Bari: Um without it I don't think people would be so into trying to learn about it because I mean, I keep coming back to the idea of being a tourist versus living with them. If I'd gone over there I wouldn't have minded the different cultures, I wouldn't have cared what they believe because I was over there just being an American with my own kind of religion. But living with them and hearing about what they talk about, what they believe in, you know, his family. And I mean, if I was over there, would have to worry about the Royal family and how the government is run, but since I was living with people who worry about that stuff and who watched Danish news every night it came up and it was just, I was just kind of pushed into "Oh this is what's happening." And it's you know, like if I was there the train strike may not phase me as much as it would if I was a tourist. I would look to the thing and say, "Oh the trains are down today, that's a shame." But being involved, they had plans to go into Copenhagen so it really threw Evan off and everyone's like, "Oh not another strike" so it's kind of weird seeing how that happened.

Me: That's kinda cool, so then the second part of the question is now you meet these people and you learn these different things, and you learn to be open because of yeah I think yeah so you're saying you learn to be open because of people you encountered a being in those situations you know you come to school with 1600 people. And I know you have a group of friends here and obviously the girls you play soccer with, but there's also a lot of other students here with different religious beliefs different cultural backgrounds different views on, you know, anything under the sun. Why is it that being in Denmark opened your eyes to those differences, like you said, as opposed to being at the school where you've got a you know a pretty diverse student body.

Bari: Yeah I never thought about it like that. I think it was because it was something that I don't live in, and so my curiosity was kind of opened up to it a little more, whereas here I see another student who obviously comes from a different religious background, or I talk to somebody who is a different religious view, and just kind of like, "OK I'll go on with my day because I don't like you know minded." But being over there it was kind of just my curiosity went up a little bit because there's a place I've never been before and with people I've never met.

- Me:** Well what heightened your curiosity about that being in a different place with different people?
- Bari:** I think I want to learn as much as I could in the 10 days of a European country that I could.
- Me:** why?
- Bari:** Because it's not something I live in I guess, like it's not a place I'm used to, like it's everyday can be like, I'm in the United States again. Everyone is different every night is different views but over in Denmark I don't know what goes on over there. I don't know what people think over there. Even though it could be the same it's not something I know.
- Me:** When you walk by that person and you don't have to think about it with that person.
- Bari:** Yeah
- Me:** Well that's really interesting. So going forward in life, what can you take from this whole experience with the exchange?
- Bari:** I want to try and see more. Not just in Europe but anywhere, any country maybe down to the Australia- New Zealand area. Going down there, finding out what goes on down there. Just being open minded to how people are. What they feel like, the political views they have, the religions that they follow, their day to day life, you know, even like now I know when I am being a tourist look around and see what people are just sitting down and how many people are sitting down and who's on their phone and how many people are just sitting and relaxing and enjoying it. Because when we were on that walk through the park that one day there's just this woman just sitting on the bench looking at the water not moving, and she was just fine just sitting there and relaxing she didn't have a book, she didn't have a Phone, she was just there in the moment. It's just something I noticed. And I think about it a lot because sometimes I'm like, sometimes you just gotta relax you know?
- Me:** Then you keep going back to that in the moment thing like, that seems to be a description of a lot of a lot of what you experienced over there.
- Bari:** Yes. Just what I notice even just one woman sitting on a bench stuck out to me. And I think even going forward in life and going to college and meeting people from different States and countries and then you know, when I plan to study abroad, no matter where I go, just looking around and trying to learn as much as possible, even if I'm not living with the person who's from there.
- Me:** That's a great takeaway, and two questions about that: What do you think it is about the exchange that fosters that belief or fosters that attitude?
- Bari:** For being my first time out of the country, living with somebody really pushed me to experience things that I wouldn't have done if I was alone, you know? Like meeting other Danish students and meeting Danish families and people who work for Danish companies, you know? Like even small things like that it kind of really pushed me to realize that whenever I do plan on going out alone this is how it could be done. And this is why it could be different.
- Me:** And then I guess the second part of that question I want to ask is would you have, or not would you, did you feel that this is what you have gotten out of the exchange before you took part like everything you just described to me?
- Bari:** Oh no I was expecting a lot less.

Me: What were you expecting?

Bari: I was expecting to go to Denmark see Denmark go to a few school classes and make a few friends with the Danes. But at the end of it I realize there's a lot more to it a lot more likely goes on over there and everyone being happy just because they saw sun for a full week, you know, like it was just things I wasn't expecting and people I became friends with and just closer bonds than I was expecting to make.

Me: Aand then at what time did you realize that, was it during the exchange at the beginning the middle or the end?

Bari: It was the middle of the exchange, because like, we start getting tired you get a little homesick, I was just kind of sitting there, and I was like this is cool for me. This is what I wanted to do and without this experience I wouldn't have gotten anything like this. I would be at home taking classes when everyone else was telling me about how cool it was and I wouldn't have known it unless I was there.

Me: So it allowed you to really appreciate it?

Bari: Yeah.

Me: Well that's really cool. So I guess the final question: what do you say to the people who are applying for next year?

Bari: That's probably the best decision they will make for their high school career because it gets you out of the classroom and you learn about something completely different even though it's not really a language that you can take when you study here. Even though it's not really a country people think about when they think of Europe, it's definitely probably something they'll remember for a while because it's cool. You're so young to go somewhere new without any one that you, that would you know, you don't have a mentor you don't have your parents you're just kind of on your own to do your own thing so I tell him it's the best decision and they'll come out thinking totally different about everything than what they went in with.

Me: I like that, coming out thinking totally different. That's a lot. That's a high bar to set that you honestly believe that.

Bari: Yeah I mean, I did.

Me: Bari, thank you very much.

Bari: Thank you.

Appendix M: Christina Interview

Me: OK so first thing, tell me about Denmark.

Christina: It was lots of fun. I was definitely a little nervous together at first, you know traveling on a plane without my parents was a little scary. And I got there and not knowing my partner who I was staying with was a little scary, although we were talking before I came and stuff like that so.

Me: That's right because you had switched your partner right?

Christina: Well my first partner couldn't host me so I had both her and my other partner, so it was really cool to meet her because I didn't really talk to her maybe just during the introductions when they came here and we got to really know each other. And her family was really nice. It made me feel like home like they made me feel as comfortable as I could and stuff like that.

Me: Oh wow so let's start off right there. I mean two things you talked about, I mean going to this home with a new partner, being a really scary thing having this plane ride be a little scary. What about being in a new country? I mean was that kind of scary?

Christina: Not really. I was kind of like it's a new country. they have different ways but I don't know, just kind of like the way the farm land was around there made me feel like here. You know like, it wasn't scary being in a different country because it seems like more people are polite over there and understanding to tourists than us so.

Me: Well that's really nice. So what specifically were you worried about going to your partner's house?

Christina: Just like I was afraid I wouldn't get closer since I didn't really know her. Like we talk over Snapchat, but maybe we don't get along in person but it was the complete opposite.

Me: What helped you to maybe get comfortable there? Like how did the family show they're welcoming? When did you feel comfortable?

Christina: They gave me their own little room then. We have some time I unpacked and they were asking if I needed water and stuff like that you know being very polite and we just had really cool discussions at dinner about my family, how I do things, how they do things about politics in Denmark, like we had a lot of cool discussions. That and their home is so cozy, like hygge was really like relevant in their home so.

Me: What do you think of that with the hygge?

Christina: Oh I love it.

Me: Why?

Christina: It's like a peaceful thing. It gives you a sense of OK relax.

Me: What specifically about it does that for you?

Christina: I think I like the atmosphere of like, everyone in there is calm and relaxed like we walked into many coffee shops, even at my partner's house no one was rushing. Everyone was taking their time. Like my family here, we rush a lot because we have so much to do it seemed like everybody there was just taking everything in.

Me: Did you expect that? Did you expect it to be like that?

Christina: No I thought I'd be a little more rushed. Kind of like us, but yeah.

Me: Christina, what was your travel experience prior to taking part in the exchange?

Christina: Uh, I have gone to 17 states so far.

Me: Wow.

Christina: Yeah, my family is trying to do all 50.

Me: Are Hawaii and Alaska, have you gone to those yet?

Christina: No, Hawaii is my college graduation at Alaska is my sister's because they are the two furthest, two biggest.

Me: How old is your sister?

Christina: My sister is 11.

Me: So tell me about, just in general what you've done with those 17 states. Have you gone out of the country before?

Christina: Ah yes, I've been to Canada a few times.

Me: And include that as well.

Christina: We've mostly taken the train. My family feels more comfortable on the train. You can get up, walk around. The first time we experienced that, we went to Disney when I was 8.

Me: You took the train down to Florida?

Christina: Yeah.

Me: Wow.

Christina: It was 17 hours, but most of it was overnight, and it had dinner and breakfast included, so you got on the train you had dinner an hour later then you went to bed. They had like a movie night in the snack car they had everything.

Me: Wait, they had a movie night?

Christina: Yeah.

Me: Like on the train?

Christina: Yeah, like in the snack car. They had a movie playing and stuff like that. Then you got up, you had breakfast, and you were in Jackson, Florida an hour away from Orlando. So it was pretty cool just being on there, and that was our first experience of the train, you know? You can get up. We can't really do car rides, all four of us, like me and my sister in a tiny space is not good after a while. So we start taking the train places. Like we took the train to Boston, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. And then we came home, like we do two to three states at a time.

Me: That makes it easy.

Christina: Yeah and then one summer trip, because my mom's a teacher, so she gets off during the summer and so the last trip we went on, we drove. We went to New Hampshire, Portsmouth New Hampshire.

Me: Cool city.

Christina: Yeah, we stay overnight there. Then we went to Bar Harbor, like Acadia National Park in Maine. We stopped in Kennebunk and saw the Bush's house there. Then we went to Vermont and came home, so we do a whole round trip. And in Canada my aunt lives in Ithaca, New York, so she's four hours from us and four hours from Canada, so we always go Friday night. We drive there, sleepover, and then she comes with us to Canada. So the first time we went we stayed a week there was during the summer, and the second time we went it was where Niagara Falls was frozen over for the first time in a while. It was really cold there,

Me: Was it really pretty?

Christina: It was really pretty, and they still had the lights underneath, so the lights and the ice and stuff like that so that was cool. And in 8th grade I went to Québec for a French trip, and that was really cool. Me and my mom, and some other people, and we did a lot there. We did like dog-sledding, snow tubing, like extreme snow tubing and stuff like that.

Me: That's really fun. So Christina, let me ask you a question then, you've had a lot of really good travel experience it sounds like with all of these trips and various trips driving going on the train going all these different places how did this travel experience and go back to place the cultures difference and when you go to different states cultures different how is his experience going to Denmark different than you know your other travel experiences

Christina: Well like, I knew a lot of the cultures of the states I was going into you know just from seeing news and reading stuff.

Me: So like a familiarity?

Christina: Yes, and Québec is like right over the border so it's kind of like touristy more. But Québec, I take French, so I've always learned about it. How they speak French and learned about their ways. But Denmark, I didn't really know much until this program and you guys told us a little bit about it. I knew it was a safe place. Their comedy is really good like, you know, but I never really knew their culture.

Me: So what's it like going into a place where you don't have that background? As opposed to a place where you do?

Christina: Um it was a little scary, you know I was walking into a foreign country.

Me: What was scary?

Christina: Just I know how they'd react to Americans but then like, what I told you about earlier. I found out they were so polite and stuff like that, but I didn't know you know like some countries are really hostile towards Americans, whereas I didn't know what to expect when I got there. Like how welcoming would Copenhagen be when I went out and I couldn't speak Danish to the store owners and then something like that in the clerk or something.

Me: How did you prepare for all that? I mean that's a lot of stuff to think about before going on this trip, so how were you able to convince yourself it's going to be OK? Or did you have to experience it before you felt it was OK?

Christina: I was kind of able to convince myself like enough to get me there and then when I got there, I had to experience it to be OK, but it didn't take me long. Just like being in the airport and stuff like that.

Me: Just like when we touchdown?

Christina: Yeah.

Me: So let me ask you this: prior to going to Denmark what would your general openness to just new experience in general, 'cause obviously you go somewhere with your family you have these new experiences, but you have your family with you, and then you're going to Denmark. What's your feeling about new experiences or being around people with different attitudes and beliefs which I'm sure you encountered?

Christina: I'm always open for new experiences, like getting a dog was a new experience, going places new experience. Denmark is my most experience with that. I just welcome it because I want to be for going to college, I want to be ready for college. Like you know, this will help me like, OK everything is different, if that might not be in a different

country but there's still so many other people with other cultures that I'll be walking into, so I was just ready to welcome it and be prepared.

Me: So then let me ask you this: when we get there get to Denmark and you're experiencing this, I mean it's only 10 days but were you confronted with anything, whether it be a cultural element and experience a custom or an activity that may have caused some type of resistance in you? Like it may have made you a little uncomfortable or it may have made you a little confused or at least you look at and weren't quite sure why it was that way?

Christina: I'm trying to think I don't know how to answer that.

Me: Was there anything that you did or that you saw that you looked at and were like, well that's not how we do it, or that's kind of different, or you want to say something might have been a little weird to you?

Christina: I mean, I did find a couple things weird, I just can't put my finger on it right now.

Me: Well hopefully we can get back to it. Do you remember if it was something at home? Or something at school? Or something out and about?

Christina: At school was definitely a little weird.

Me: Why?

Christina: Well the classes are 93 minutes there's a 5 to 10-minute break in between then 15 minutes between each class. It was definitely a little different. When I asked my partner, they didn't know their classrooms until the day of or the day before for the next class. So like, whereas us we have this is your classroom all the time, whereas they switch classrooms for each subject so that's a little weird.

Me: Even, this is your seat for the whole year.

Christina: Yeah that I found a little weird that you had to do that.

Me: What do you think about that, by the end after experiencing that?

Christina: I did like the laid back like, you know relaxing kind of environment that the teachers had that they were strict but they gave you more freedom. I like structure in my opinion a period today almost the same classes same classrooms that's how I do it so it was kind of good to be back to like, you know, be here.

Me: No I get that, so is that something that when you step back while you're there, "Oh man I just don't think I could live in this society?" Or like, you're just not used to it?

Christina: I just think I'm not used to it maybe if I was there for a little bit, and got more experience I'd be fine just I grew up with a set schedule and stuff like that now that's how I do it so when I go over there and they don't really have as much of a set schedule, it's kinda weird to me.

Me: So was there anything else besides the schedule, because I know it's come up with a number of students during the group stuff. Was that not having a set schedule something experienced outside the classroom as well?

Christina: Yeah, yeah.

Me: In what way?

Christina: When we did stuff, it seemed like they would just take their time and everything. And even when they were over here they just like, took their time and you know, we're like, "Hey we have to be here or there" and we plan it all out and stuff like that. Like I remember we were in Washington DC, and I was like OK this is like, how far and then it's that far to Hard Rock, so we do that, so it's just they would take their time and stuff

like that. And what I found really interesting and kind of causing the turbulence in like the trip, we were in the Castle in Helsinor and we wanted to see everything. We knew that we want to see everything, and get food at the same time. The Americans were hungry as much, but the Danes were kind of hurrying us along so we didn't get to see the full Castle and then we got to the catacombs, and being with Caitlin and Liz, wanted to see all of it, we want to go as far as we could that we were allowed to and next thing you know we couldn't find our Danes anywhere. They had left with everyone 'cause they wanted to get food and we were like, oh like you know maybe we could do like, you know you could have told us we'd be ok with them getting food 'cause we knew the town. Like Helsinor was right where we were going to get food so we knew we were going to get food and stuff you know, and so we'll go to the catacombs because we're not really hungry we will meet up with you guys, but we never communicated that way, and they just kind of left and Liz's partner came back kind of frazzled like "We've been looking for you guys, like where are you?" And we were like, "We never even left like we just, we were looking at, next thing we knew we couldn't find you guys, so we thought maybe you're in the catacombs still like you went through there so we went through there."

Me: So that's interesting. So is that common among the Danes? Because it seems like that's another thing I've heard from a number of students I've talked to, is that they kind of felt like there are these moments that the Danes just kind of disappeared and then came back.

Christina: Yeah not as much with mine but I did hear about that too. It's just I think because we were in their country, we saw everything like they already saw everything and we want to experience everything, although when I was thinking about that they kind of didn't really like, they didn't really want to see as much when they were over here too it seemed like they just wanted to relax.

Me: What do you think that difference is though?

Christina: I don't know. I guess maybe 'cause they're so open to different cultures they learn about other cultures and here we're kind of you know, we have we know about other cultures but we never like.

Me: What do you mean?

Christina: Well like they travel to a lot of countries, you know? They travel. They go different places in Denmark. Each place in Denmark has a different culture like here in the US where it's like us, it seems like not a lot of people travel outside the US. And the school system really focuses more on the US side of stuff, whereas we don't really talk about like, how the Danish felt about this and stuff like that. So I guess they just they knew more about the culture.

Me: Do you think they experience culture differently when they travel?

Christina: I think they do. I mean every place is a different culture, so I don't think it'd be the same everywhere.

Me: So when we were traveling over there, what did you have to get out of the whole experience being over in Denmark?

Christina: I could get close to my partner and have someone I could go back to in Denmark. Like, I'm already planning to go back next summer before college.

Me: Are you really?

Christina: Yeah, I talked to her. I was saying I really wanna do this, and I'm hoping to go back and maybe hit a few other countries because we weren't able to go to Sweden so maybe head to Sweden and like, I always want to go to Brussels, Belgium. And Ireland, and Scotland could be another time but I want to go back and they said I'm always welcome with my family or whoever.

Me: So would you go by yourself next summer?

Christina: If I was going to just Denmark, yes. But if I have to go to other, you know, besides Sweden like Denmark and Sweden, I'd be comfortable with. If I happen to get other countries I think, I'd want someone to bring along with me.

Me: Right, but what I'm saying is you know most of the traveling you've done is with your family, but you do that with another friend or either of your partners?

Christina: Yeah.

Me: Last year, you're applying for this program about a year ago. Would you have said, you know what, I can go to Denmark on my own?

Christina: No

Me: So what changed?

Christina: I just felt so comfortable in the country, like in the presence of everyone knowing everyone. They were like, come back, you know like they wanted me to come back too. So it was kind of like, and I never got to see everything 'cause it was always you know, we didn't have time because we were in school and stuff, but during the summer you know, I wanna see Copenhagen again. I also want to see Sweden and all the other little towns and stuff like that, so I just, I'm more curious about Denmark now like you know getting there is curious but now I'm just like, I haven't seen everything. I'm even more curious.

Me: So you wanna see more of the sites over there?

Christina: Yeah.

Me: Let's go back to a year ago again would you believe that you were going to take a trip to Europe with your friend, two friends and not your family?

Christina: No.

Me: Would you have been comfortable with that?

Christina: I would not have been, you know, even like not even my parents or my sister but even like any family member. Like I would have wanted to be with me But like now going without them it seems like I can do it. I don't need them like you know they're only one call away, like you know they're there when I need them.

Me: Can you maybe talk about the change, because you talked earlier about the kind of fear of flying over there going to a different country being scary, being in someone else's house being scary, and now you're talking about taking this big trip, like why?

Christina: It really like, within a couple days it kind of was just a quick little instant that was like, I can do this.

Me: What did you learn about yourself that you feel confident you can do this?

Christina: I felt more grown up. Like you know like, I'm going to a new country that my parents trust me to go to a new country. Like they've never been there. They've never traveled outside of you know, North America. Like, knowing that my parents trust me kind of put more trust in me and then walking around and everyone in Copenhagen, kind of like

when I was buying something, took me as more of a grown up than a kid. Like here, if you're going to the mall everyone thinks of you as a teenager. Like, oh you know shopping teenager stuff. But when I was there even when it's shopping they kind of thought of me as more mature and stuff like that, and I really like that. And it just showed me how independent I can be which made me like, start to think about college, I could be independent college like it really just kind of helped me move on from the fact that I don't need my parents with me 24/7. Like I can like, I want them there. I will always have my parents, but I don't need them.

Me: You were saying you were kind of forced to handle yourself on your own in these situations and you're like, "Oh I can do this after all." Whereas before, and those other trips, you had your parents there.

Christina: Yeah, and like I did everything with my parents or my sister, so just being on my own I was like, this makes me realize like, 'cause I was always scared of going to college like you know. And I always want to stay in-state, and I'm still going to stay in-state no matter what 'cause it's cheaper, but now I'm like, maybe I won't come home from college all the time now that I think I can do this. I can do it.

Me: It's amazing how those thoughts form.

Christina: Yeah just traveling to Denmark it's like I can really do this.

Me: Well let me ask you this: if you had this trip again, so we didn't do this exchange, let's say that you don't get that whole process throughout the whole year at this point, this year or a month ago 'cause I guess we left or we were over there. Exactly a month ago you had taken that same trip with your parents and you know, you do the thing with your parents or staying hotel you're out with your family seeing the sights. You go to restaurants with your family. Do you have these same thoughts now?

Christina: I would not.

Me: Why?

Christina: Well they gave more trust in like me and stuff. Here it's kind of like you're going to take public transport so if maybe you should drive and even driving's a little iffy, but they're just the environment like you know, with the trust and going out to like we'd just be like, "Oh we're going to go to Copenhagen on Friday night" and that's like, "Oh well we're going to Philadelphia" and that's a little weird to go Philadelphia on a Friday night randomly, and so they're like OK. And we went. We took the train and like, even like us Americans we were kind of like they let us be in charge of what we want to do. Like in Copenhagen we're like OK, you know I always wanted to like, I shopped at all Danish stores. I didn't want to do like, stuff I could get here, so I always ask them their opinions and they would show me and we'd go there but they're like if you want to go to any store, like you know just walk up this way and stuff like that. They had these candied almonds that were really good and they were like selling them on the street and like I'm going to get them and I kind of walked away grab them and came back to the group whereas my family would be like, "OK let me come with you" and stuff like that so just having the independence of like OK I'm going to count on myself and by this where's my sister be with me and be like "Oh OK I'm coming with you" or something.

Me: So correct me if I'm wrong, but it sounds like you're saying when you're with your parents you're here there's a little bit more of a, I don't wanna say a leash, but like a little bit more

of a restriction on what you can and cannot do. And then in Denmark there's a lot more of a you know, go figure it out.

Christina: Yeah, I mean, my parents have always been like, we take one day at a time. Stuff pops up we'll do it but still always like around vacation it's always a set schedule because my mom likes to plan. So on vacation it's always a set schedule whereas it seems like this vacation it was only set for school, for the activities we all did as a group, but other than that we are free.

Me: So when you're on vacation, you have that set schedule it's like you're not making that decision, but when you're in Denmark it's like we'll figure out what we're going to do.

Christina: Yeah and I also always know what I can and cannot do. Like in Denmark or America I can't do this but I can do this and stuff like that. I think it was also that I had people my own age there, whereas when I go on vacation with my family I have to do like I can't go on my own because it's like you know if I had a friend, my parents probably would let us go on our own really quick but like I'm always...

Me: You didn't have that opportunity.

Christina: Yeah, so I think just being without parents and just being with teenagers and like you know we yeah.

Me: OK that's interesting and so Christina, these are all really good thoughts, was there anything in Denmark that we talk about stuff that may have caused resistance, but was there anything in Denmark that you felt very comfortable with from the get go at any point that you experienced the first day the last day or at any time?

Christina: Just the towns they have like the small towns even Copenhagen like you know it's a huge city with the way it maneuvered and stuff it feels kind of small and homey and stuff like that. I just I liked it so much

Me: That's cool.

Christina: Yeah.

Me: So did that did having that comfortableness of the small homey towns, and realizing that it's not you know, an expensive city, or too overwhelming, did that help you? Was that something that you thought about while you were there that helped make you more comfortable?

Christina: Yeah.

Me: It did.

Christina: Most definitely, like I would have like, I picture Philadelphia is a big city and it's huge even though it has a small town feel in some parts but like in Copenhagen, it never had the skyscrapers. The tallest building was like, a hospital. Everything was small and old they had more history than like our cities.

Me: Have any of your prior experiences going into this trip had any influence? Is like something that you looked at thought about while you're in Denmark to maybe influence your time positively or negatively?

Christina: I feel like I knew Denmark is safe and stuff, but like hearing on the news what's going on in Europe, I was always afraid that it's going to affect Denmark when I'm over there.

Me: Such as?

Christina: Like the terrorists and stuff like that. Like I was afraid, but they decide to give a different country and it kind of got me scared on the way there. But then I'm getting there and realizing it took me a couple days to realize, really realize how safe it actually was and stuff like that.

Me: Interesting. You tell me Christina we've got about ten minutes left. You've talked about going to college. We've talked about you wanting to take this trip. So going forward in your life, what are the big things that for you came from this experience?

Christina: The independence and like, just knowing that I went to Denmark on my own. Like with the group, but on my own that I can do life on my own. My family is always going to be there, but I can go to college I can get married, have kids on my own, like it's going to be me, not like, oh my family is going to be there all the time, like just self-independence or something like that.

Me: Did you expect that going into this program?

Christina: No, I never expected that. I thought I'd learn about the culture which I did and like you know, but I never thought I'd be like more comfortable with myself, like come back in like walking the school, and I'm like I got this. I feel like OK I've always been so anxious and stressed in school, but now it's like you know, I don't have long. I'll be graduating and always and now it's looking forward to later things in my life.

Me: So another question, but you go to a school with 1600 students and the students are different in a lot of different ways whether what social class their family is in, or socioeconomic class, or race, ethnicity, religion, political views, all of that. How does it compare being in Denmark versus being here? Some lessons are the same? Or do you notice things differently in one setting or another?

Christina: Well Denmark didn't have as much diversity. It seemed like everyone was Danish or Swedish. Here we have so many different cultures coming in, mixing. I'm in Denmark it's just one huge culture.

Me: So that's all the difference for the next thing, because you talk a lot about the independence that you got over there, or this awakening of a sense of independence. We have classes here that talk about managing personal finance, we have opportunities here, you could take on you know different roles within the school or outside the school. Why did it take going to Denmark to have that awakening of independence?

Christina: Well I did a business class my freshman year and we kind of learned how to manage stuff like that, but experiencing stuff like that first hand I had to know how much money I had going there. I had to know how much money I spent on this this and this putting it together still making sure I had enough so first thing experience over there like I was able to control the money like you know I had and I can't run out you know like I have this amount and stuff like that.

Me: What if you had done a project like that in your business class would it have had the same effect?

Christina: I feel like a project wouldn't 'cause I think it could be more about the grade and like yeah you can like go shopping and stuff like that, and I always went shopping and I'm like OK I have \$60.00 but like this time I had a credit card, like a debit card and I was like OK, always check how much I have how much these fees are and stuff like that. And my parents were also checking, but I was checking to like \$60.00 I was like OK I could

get this in this \$60.00 done. I was like OK I had this amount coming in, I spent this much I just left like how am I gonna do this if I still want to go shopping and stuff like that.

Me: So again there's that independence that you have to make those decisions yourself. What about the cultural aspect that you've kind of alluded to the fact that you feel you've learned a lot about the culture?

Christina: Yeah just hygge.

Me: The hygge, yeah?

Christina: The hygge in every way, and the public transportation, I love that. I loved how when they drove they drove to work if they had to like they took public transportation and biked anything and that was just so cool. Like we have people taking trains to work and stuff like that, but we drive so much. As much as I like driving, like I was so good about getting back in driving on my own like, I would have been there and driven if I could, but I didn't know where I was, and they have manuals and I cannot drive a manual. So if we were going to go somewhere and It'd be like me and my partner, like we couldn't. I'd be like, oh I can go because my partner didn't have her license and I don't know how the licensing works from like the United States to Denmark.

Me: I don't know I know to rent a car you have to be 25 to be able to do that, but I don't know just to drive. But so you picked up on culture and you've mentioned hygge a couple times. We have classes here, and a similar question to the final finance class we have classes where we talk about different cultures: African-Asian history 9th grade, even Western-Civ in 10th grade we talk about different stuff. We have the contemporary issues class in 12th grade which I don't think you've taken or 11th grade as well but I don't think you've taken that have you?

Christina: No.

Me: Ok so you know, we teach about different cultures in these classes. Do you get the same thing in the classroom as you did in Denmark?

Christina: No.

Me: Why?

Christina: I feel like the classroom is more, it's all new information, whereas going there yeah it's like this about Denmark like you know when you guys were teaching us. It's like, oh I learned that but I didn't know this like they do stuff that we didn't know about that we didn't learn about, like it seems like we don't learn everything about the culture until we are immersed in it.

Me: Did you feel that from talking to other students, did you feel that other people picked up on the same cultural elements or did people pick up on different culture elements?

Christina: I feel like they picked up on the same. Again I stayed with my group, plus of course my friends like my friends but then the Danes are friends and everyone did their own thing, but I think everyone got the same experience with the culture like it was different than like, well there's some stuff to say but most of it was like well, we never learned this. It's not in fact it was like something my family did that was a cultural difference that there's no fact about that we could have learned beforehand.

Me: So just that exposure allows you to kind of soak that stuff in a little bit differently? Because you know, it's not taught I guess it's not a factual way of doing things.

Christina: Yeah.

Me: So let me ask you this. So this will b.e the last question with the amount of time that we have but let's say that you know we're going through application process right now, so let's say someone comes to you and says listen Christina, I've really wanted to go to Denmark, but I'm not quite sure if it's worth it. What am I going to get out of it?

Christina: I would tell them to go to Denmark, go to Denmark. Like I said, it's worth it. I just can't explain everything you'll get from Denmark, like I was like, everything so nice like I just I was like, I just can't explain the feeling I have about Denmark that I love it so much and I wish I could share it with you, but you can't, you can't feel it until you go there yourself

Me: What is it that they can't feel until you experience it? Let me put it this way, if I had to justify this to the school board or to the administration, as a teacher I can't just say "I can't describe it." What should I tell them?

Christina: I would describe it as like an eye opening experience. You are immersed in this culture unknown, besides a few facts you learn beforehand. You're learning everything first hand. You are doing everything on your own and just getting so close with your partner. You have a connection that you can't have with your friends here, like you have that I met you in 10 days we became so close. In 10 days you can become close. It seemed like saying sharing the bond of like going, like we like "Friends" so we watched "Friends" a lot, "Sound of Music" like you know we had so many similarities that became like, I felt so close to her and I like her and the country I love so much and like it's just definitely worth going to Denmark.

Me: Christina that's awesome thank you very much.

Appendix N: Kerry Interview

Me: So same thing as when we were in Denmark, just myself and my advisor and I might have a second advisor at some point but that's basically all who will hear this. As you know, answer the questions as you think of them, don't tell me what you think I want to know. I'm more interested in everything so, first thing, tell me about, just your overall impression of the exchange.

Kerry: Coming in I was skeptical about it just because it's somebody you've never met, from six thousand miles away, who you might get along with, you might not get along with. And you have to live with them for, two weeks. Like, I really loved the exchange personally, um other people might have different opinions based on their partners and what they did, I didn't have any. I think it's a great program, I don't know, it was fun

Me: What was like, what was the most fun thing?

Kerry: I think for me, like I love different cultures, like I love travelling, that's one of my big things I want to do, like that's what I want to do especially after college. And I loved getting to know somebody who lives a completely different life than me, but also the same kind of life. Like she's a high school student, she's living with her parents, she's working, but you go over there and it's a completely different scenario than over here

Me: Ok, so it was a lot of, like you see her life but maybe some general things she does are the same but the details day-to-day or that that

Kerry: Especially like the school day over there.

Me: Yea? What did you think about that?

Kerry: That was, it blew my mind, like we were able to walk to the town center. If we were to leave school right now and walk to Royal farms, we would literally get a detention for it.

Me: Oh you might get suspended.

Kerry: Oh, yea, it's just crazy.

Me: Um, do you think that says a lot about the school, or does that say a lot about Denmark?

Kerry: I think it's just society, in general, like they're not scared what could happen compared to here, like we're not allowed to leave school because of the liability the school could have if you got hit by a car, or somebody getting picked up and kidnapped, and what not. But that over there is not really a thing. Like, parents over there kinda let, like my partner's curfew is like 2am and we walked from the train station back to another student's house one night. And we would never in a million years be able to do that.

Me: Yea.

Kerry: Because we would be scared. I remember walking with Bari and our partners and it was just us and everyone was like a mile ahead of us. Me and Bari just turned and we were like, "we would never be able to do this at home." We were walking down a random neighborhood, like all the bushes, somebody could have been standing behind the bushes and we would have had no idea. But that's not something we worried about over there. My partner was like, "I do this every weekend by myself," and I was like, no.

Me: Do you think you could do that here?

Kerry: I don't know, like when I babysit down the street I run home, because I am scared what could happen. Or my dad meets me down the street halfway. I've walked in like West

Chester at night, but it's lit up and there's people around. I think you could do it, you just have to be cautious where you are.

Me: Do you have just different perceptions of what is happening out in society than they do? Is that why they maybe, do they not think of the worst, or is their society just safer?

Kerry: A little bit of both, I think that they definitely give everyone the benefit of the doubt. They don't do the whole confrontation thing and they just let it go and or they don't think it's happening. And society basically, they're one of the safest happiest countries in the world. It's not one thing, like you don't really hear about these mass murders that happen, compared to here. Or like little basic murders, like Philadelphia, you go into Philadelphia and you're like, that's one of the little dumping sites for murders like where do they have that there, or not to my knowledge.

Me: Yea, I mean, it's interesting and I think it's interesting, and I don't know what the difference is, like why that is or why they're able to do that. So it's definitely, do you feel that, did that enhance your ability to enjoy everything because you got to?

Kerry: Yea, like they said, or I don't remember when this was, but when they were over here, they were scared of the whole shooting situation at the schools. And I came over there and there were no doors locked, to any room, like every door was unlocked and like it was something I didn't have to worry about like over here. I'm not saying I worry about everything like 24/7 just cause that's what I'm used to. Like this is our society, then over there I'm like, wow, I can walk a street at one in the morning coming back from Copenhagen when going out to dinner and not have to look behind my back to see if someone is following us, or if there is a car following us.

Me: Yea, so um, I mean that, that's really nice for getting to enjoy it and see things. So to backtrack a little bit, you talked at the very beginning about you like traveling and you like culture, can you talk a little bit about your travel experience before taking part in the exchange?

Kerry: Not much to be honest. I've traveled a lot domestically. I've done California, Arizona, I've done all up and down the east coast, but we never really went outside of the country. My dad travels to Belgium a lot and so he'll send me pictures a lot and I just love how cool it looks.

Me: Like the architecture?

Kerry: Yea and the idea of I guess coming outside of here. I feel like America is trapped in its little bubble most of the time, while over in Europe everybody is kinda inter-connected and knows what's going on. It's easy to get from one country to another, unlike really here. Kinda like here and over there. But for me it was like the idea of being able to. Like traveling we're going to Bermuda and I'm so excited, um, but yea Denmark was like the first time I've really been outside of the country.

Me: Have you been outside before? Because you're saying not really

Kerry: No, I mean we were going to and like we had everything planned. We were going to Aruba, and we had the Venezuela-Aruba thing happened and we had to cancel our trip at the last minute. Because my mom was scared.

Me: That's a shame, but you are, you're doing Bermuda this summer? How do you think that will be different than Denmark? Because Bermuda has a different culture than we do. But how's that trip, do you anticipate it being any different than Denmark?

Kerry: I think it's like kinda the same when you travel down South here, like oh you get to see this like, oh southern bell culture but you don't get to see the real culture. When we were in Denmark I was living the real culture. We were living with families and we were going to school with these people so we got to know them one on one, but we also got to know their families and what they do and how they embrace, like the Danish Culture. And I won't be able to do that in Bermuda, like I won't be able to live with a family, a host family and really like dive into their culture. Yea I'll be able to go to dinner, like go to the shops to see what they do, but I won't be able to live the life as a, what are Bermuda people called?

Me: Bermudans.

Kerry: Bermudans?

Me: Yea.

Kerry: Compared to a Danish person, I lived the life of a Danish person.

Me: Were you expecting that going over?

Kerry: Yes and no. I didn't think I'd be able to experience like fully, what they do day to day, and I want to say we like a hundred percent did. I feel like a lot of it was pressure to show the Americans the things in Denmark, compared to showing us their lives, if that makes sense

Me: Could you explain that a little more?

Kerry: We went, we had a plan every single day. We knew where we were going, we knew what we were doing each time. They don't do that, they don't just randomly go to Sweden for a day, or go to Copenhagen every single day, like we did or just like out of nowhere go to Tivoli for the day, and like, I like doing that, like I think that they gave us the opportunity to see their parts of the culture, and I think at night we were able to live the Danish side of the culture, like we sat at the table and talked for hours and I think that's one thing, that like Europeans do a lot, is like kinda sit, relax and talk, but I'm, I think I lived the life of a Danish student, but I think in some aspects it was planned out

Me: So there's still a little vacation element to it is what you're saying?

Kerry: Yea.

Me: Ok, so you mentioned going to Tivoli, you mentioned going to Sweden, what other things do you feel like were really planned out?

Kerry: The little cities we went to, most of the time we didn't have a plan, we just got on buses and eventually got there.

Me: Ok, so you did all that stuff, and you went to the little towns, so you still get to see some of the sites. Obviously, it's a 10-day trip, do you think, did doing those type of things, doing those vacation things take away from your ability to experience?

Kerry: No because I think we experienced it in a different aspect, like we were living the life of the Danish student at home, but when, we were able to live the life as a Danish person.

Me: Ok.

Kerry: In like their society, though we aren't Danish.

Me: What do you think were the biggest aspects of being able to live that life of a Danish person. I mean you mention the family dinners was a big thing.

Kerry: I think just being able to relax, like the stresses we have here in school. Like coming back ooh, being a senior it wasn't as bad as the juniors, but I definitely felt like this level

of stress and even with prom season coming up, and like the end of the year the seniors are trying to like cram everything in before we're out May 24th and I think like, we have so much stress here and they don't and I think like, being able to just do, instead of run around like crazy.

Me: I mean that's definitely that hygge lifestyle. So let me ask you this then. So talk about maybe some of your openness to new experiences and different attitudes and beliefs. Maybe going into the exchange, you know how prior to applying, and how would you have rated or felt your openness to these new experiences was.

Kerry: I feel right in the beginning I was kinda like a six or a seven cause I kinda like to do me and I like to kinda do what I'm doing, kinda in the flow of what I'm used to. But I think after they came here, and I kinda saw like them, I was open to like, I think I actually experienced a lot when they were here too, so I think that was at like an 8 and I think the plane ride over here, over there I was like, oh my God, what is going to happen there's a crying baby behind me, like is like....

Me: There were three of them.

Kerry: I know I was just so overwhelmed and then I think we finally stepped down and I saw my partner and all of them. And at that time I was like, a ten I was really excited to be over there and be able to see things.

Me: So was there anything when you got there, obviously you say you got to a ten when you first saw your partner again, and when you first arrived at the school, but was there anything there that you experienced there that maybe caused some type of resistance and you didn't like, or you were confused about, or anything that may have caused you to step back a little bit?

Kerry: Hum, I have no idea. I think the language barrier actually. It wasn't, they were pretty good about speaking English around us, but I think they a few times, especially the last couple days we were there, I just remember we would all hang out in a group and I think it was at Brendan partner's house, and we were having lunch, like a very late lunch, early dinner and they were speaking Danish and we were like, "English please, we're sorry" and they kept going and going. And I remember my partner being like, "Guys, English!" And they still kept going and we walked to this train station and they just talked Danish the whole time. So I think that was kinda like a pushback. I was like, Ok, am I annoying them, or like what's going on, and I like I would think it would have been nice to speak Danish so I would have been able to understand, because I think it did put up a wall between like, what's going on and what we thought was going on. But I don't know if there's anything that completely stopped me from like, do I want to be this open to these new ideas, or do I think this is a good idea? But I think it was like the language itself.

Me: Alright, so two things with that how do you, I mean when you're in that moment, how do you get past that whole language barrier?

Kerry: Um...

Me: Or do you?

Kerry: I think with most of us, like I spent a lot of the week with Bari, and so I think most of the time me and Bari did our own thing. Like we kinda caught up on what was going on over here cause like, yea we're speaking English, and that's not their first language. So to speak English for ten days straight was probably really hard for them. So we kinda,

towards those last couple days we both realized that they were probably catching up on stuff that they had been missing with their friends and like what's going on, so I kinda just stuck to doing me and when they wanted to speak English and if something was really going on and they wanted to let us know, they were going to, so I think it was kinda just creating an understanding that needed to be there, and I don't think a lot of people were able to create an understanding, like why aren't they talking to me? Why are they speaking Danish? Are they talking behind my back?

Me: So can you talk about that? What do you mean by creating an understanding?

Kerry: I think a lot of us felt out of place when they started speaking in Danish, just because we didn't know what was going on. Like were they talking behind our backs, no they weren't, but like it was just easier for them

Me: But you still have to, did you have that thought that they were talk, like a possibility

Kerry: Oh, a hundred percent, so many times, just cause a lot of them knew I thought that, so they started making the joke of like, saying my name randomly in sentences, just to piss me off, and I knew they weren't. I think it's just the idea of having a conversation with them and now they're talking to somebody else in Danish, but I think especially me and lexi because we spent so much time, we're going to let them do them and they'll come to us when they want us to hear what they're saying. And most of the time they told us what they were saying after the fact so I think that kinda created an understanding, and I think with us, even Mia said it she was like, I understand what you're saying, but I don't. Because there's such a like, they're so into proper English over there. Like we have our slang, we have our words that we say that they have no idea what we're saying.

Me: They haven't learned that yet.

Kerry: Yea, and I think like that was kinda, I could talk to them, and I could talk to Bari, and they don't fully understand what I'm saying, and I don't understand what they're saying fully at all. And it was kind of an understanding between both sides of us.

Me: So that's interesting. So it's like there's that one element where it's hard to have that barrier up, then there's that other element where it's trying to make sense of what they're doing, I mean, so by the end, you were pretty comfortable, they're not really talking about me, they're ok, so that's kinda cool. Was there anything else where you had a similar experience that you had to make sense of it that way that may have been a bit different, not necessarily uncomfortable, but different?

Kerry: Going out to restaurants is a lot different, they are very like, our service over here is like, you're on top of your tables, and over there they're like, eh they're fine. I don't need to go over there, like especially like that whole tipping thing, like, you don't leave tips, that's rude, which I think was definitely weird for me. Like I work in the food industry, I work in a restaurant two of them actually and like I so like we're both really fast paced environment where you have to check up on your tables, you have to do this, but I don't really remember our server coming over for drinks, to take our order, and to put food on the table. Like I don't ever remember him ever coming over, like how is everything, how are you guys doing, do you want any refills.

Me: So what did you think of that? I mean, how do you see that server then, like you being a server and you seeing the server in a much more passive role than what you're used to?

Kerry: Being in America, that would be horrible service, it would be rude. You probably wouldn't get a good tip at all, but over there it's like again, creating an understanding, like, but that's how they are here, that's their job like they aren't supposed to come up all the time. They want this hygge lifestyle where you get your food and you sit there and just talk. Like you enjoy your people, you enjoy the comfort of the area, but over there, here we're like fast paced get in get out.

Me: Yea.

Kerry: So I think that was kinda like, something different.

Me: That's interesting you had that experience, the first time you saw that did you think the waiter was rude, is that what you're saying?

Kerry: I wouldn't say, I don't want to say rude.

Me: Or just not a good server?

Kerry: Not up to the standards that I understand I guess is the right way to put it.

Me: So now you go back to Denmark, let's say you go back next year and you're sitting in a restaurant. How much attention do you pay to that level of service?

Kerry: I doubt much. I think I would pay attention to the service still because I'm not used to it, but if my mom and my sister were like, "why aren't they coming to our table? Where's our server?" Like looking around, I'd be like, "this is not how they work," but if I went to one by myself I'd still be like, "Where is everybody?" because that's not what I'm used to I guess.

Me: So the difference there is if you're alone versus with your family?

Kerry: Yea.

Me: So you're probably more aware of yourself and your feelings whereas if you're with your family you're not going to pick up on it in the same way as you did?

Kerry: And I feel like, I've, how do I word this, I think that experiences shape like how you are, especially in a different area, and I think even that one experience, I want to better understand why this server isn't coming to our table like I'm coming to a table at home.

Me: So now let's flash forward, you go to another country, any random country, you're in Bermuda, I've never been there so I don't know what it's like, but you're in Bermuda and service in a restaurant is different than in America, but also different than in Denmark, what would you think? How do you handle that?

Kerry: I would probably act like I am at home before I went to Denmark, like where is our server? Why is our server coming up to me so much? And why are they coming up every time I have like food in my mouth. Or where's our server? They came to us once. I still think I would, I would still probably do the same thing I did in Denmark like, I'd be like "where's our server this is kind of rude" just because this is what I'm accustomed to.

Me: But you don't think you could take that like you can't translate that yet?

Kerry: I don't know if, I think I would have a better understanding than my mom and my sister would just because I went out to another place and they haven't been. But I still think like, I've lived here for 17 years so, and this is all I have known.

Me: So in the moment?

Kerry: In the moment, I'd be like, "what the hell?" But I think after I realized what I've just said and like where's our server I'd be like "Oh wait we're in a different country this is probably why."

Me: So it might take a little bit?

Kerry: Yeah but I think I did just better than people who haven't been out of the country before just because you see the differences in one culture. OK, maybe it translates to this culture.

Me: Or different differences you know? Almost anything when we were in Denmark that seemed I don't know very normal and comfortable to you that you didn't have any cultural difference whether it be positive or negative they just saw things like OK this is how it is at home.

Kerry: I think that was pretty much the home life. Like we came home after school. I went to my room I napped, or just sat there and talked to my friends, the parents asked me "how's your day? what did you do today?" And I think all over the place that's pretty much what every parent does. Out and about in the cities, I don't know what this place is called I know you went there the food trucks.

Me: Yeah, yeah, yeah, the outdoor marketplace.

Kerry: That kind of reminded me of what was that place in Philly? Oh Reading Terminal. It kind of reminded me of that. I think the fast moving place of that and the different food places and everybody moving around each other and honestly kind of being rude and awesome like Philly. We're kind of from being tough, and I think I went to that food truck place, and I got yelled at multiple times. Like the sweetest girl literally, I don't know she was so hangry like I don't even know, but that kind of reminded me of being home with this "I want my food, you got out of line for 30 seconds sorry, Go to the back." Like that was kind of...

Me: It's funny, sometimes you're in a place and there is a certain luster when you have that vacation feeling and then sometimes you start to see that luster wear off when you see things as they might actually be. What did she yell at you for?

Kerry: OK so Bari and her partner were standing in line and it was Luke, Bari, their partners, me and my partner, then a few people came came up later. And I had no idea what I wanted to eat and I hadn't eaten all day, it was 4:30 in the afternoon, almost dinnertime and I was starving. So we got this one food truck 'cause we didn't feel like walking we were like, "we're going to eat here and that's it." So I walked out to see the menu I stood there with, I think it was Luke, came back, are standing in line for 5 minutes at least and this one bitch, I don't know who she thought she was but she just like looks and goes, "You got out of line get to the back," and I turned and I was like, "what do you mean? we've been standing here. I got out to see the menu for 30 seconds." And she goes, "Well I'm hungry, and you just cut." And I was like you know what whatever, and I got out of line, and I just stood over there, and waited until they got their food. And the funny thing is she ended up cutting in front of Bari's partner, and he turned to her and was like, "Look who's the cutter now."

Me: That's awesome.

Kerry: 'Cause like the Swedish and Danes, you know, they kind of have that ...

Me: They don't like each other.

Kerry: It was just, it was pretty funny.

Me: Alright, I guess you could have talked about this but give me some details maybe about what it was like to actually be in the house of someone of a different culture than you.

Kerry: The first couple days was probably uncomfortable.

Me: Why?

Kerry: Because you have no idea who they are, what they've been through in life. You don't know what really their job is, what they do. I think that was the thing, I don't want to step out of bounds because I'm used to being in my home and I'm kind of used to having this, everybody does, you can go the fridge, you can grab whatever you want. You can sit on your couch and nobody would say anything. I think there's like, you don't know, you don't know exactly what their boundaries are as a family. And I think that was the uncomfortable part, my family was awesome, they were extremely nice. But I think that was ...

Me: So how do you get over that? How did you, I mean because you said it's at the beginning so how do you get to that point?

Kerry: After, we had dinner together, I don't know what night because Julie wasn't there. So just meet my partner and her parents, and we just sat there and they just asked me everything that was going on in my life, like with college and they kind of filled me in on the things over there and what my partner is going to go through and just like that. Because her mom's from America, and she went to school over here and then left and went over there, and now she was kind of like behind him what we knew but she was still able to connect a tad bit with me. And I think the dad was too because the dad lived in America for a little bit, so I think that helped me get over it because like, I'm usually like a quietish person when you first get to know me. But once you get to know me, I can be really annoying I'm just really talkative and I like to know. And I think that's going to help us like just sitting down one night and being able to talk.

Me: So just bridging gaps or breaking down boundaries of some sort through. I mean at what point did you feel very comfortable being there? Or, more comfortable?

Kerry: I think by, I think it was like the fourth night, the third or fourth night there. Just because at that point I had conversations with her mom and dad in the morning, like I gave them their presents I brought over here. We sat down at the dinner table had a talk, they drove us to school every morning so we will talk in the morning then, so I guess you could say it was somewhat of a longish time for the 10 days. But at the same time, it was less and less each day, and by the time we were leaving I didn't want to leave, because I was comfortable with these people, like I was able to go grab a piece of bread if I wanted to, I just felt at place.

Me: So now let's say, a hypothetical situation, you find yourself in a similar situation, or someone is going to Denmark next year. What do you tell that person so that the time frame to get from discomfort to comfort is less than what you experienced?

Kerry: Sit down the first night with the family instead of going out with everybody, I think the first night we got there was a Thursday, Friday?

Me: Friday night.

Kerry: A Friday night. So we all want to go out. We all wanted to be together, we hadn't seen each other for 150 days or whatever it was, and so we were like so excited to be together and I'm happy right now because I was able to see everybody again, but I think like the first or second night is probably the most important because you're there in their house and you need to get to know them because you're gonna be living with them for the next 10 days. And going out with your friends You'll see them tomorrow like we saw all the

exact same people the next day at 9:00 in the morning, and so I think had I stayed home the first night or the second night I would have been able to be comfortable by the third morning or the second night.

Me: So did that, was there like a delight in your ability to immerse yourself because you went out?

Kerry: Now I wouldn't say like immerse yourself, I thought that for the mom, because she would make us a dinner, and get to know us. I didn't want to say like, my partner was like, "Oh we're going out, we're going to another person's house, end of discussion." But it was like, we wanted to too. I think we immersed ourselves in a different way, because like they see each other every single day for 8 hours a day, so they don't feel the need to go out on school nights and what not. But they like to go out with each other on Fridays and Saturdays, and they tend to go out to nightclubs, but obviously we couldn't do that but I think it was, we kind of saw what their nights with their friends would be because I know a lot of them. Especially the one closest, like, they'll stay down on a Thursday night and have like a movie night and obviously they'll have like wine and stuff with them but we just sat there in Bari's partner's living room and all just talked. We had our little like Faxe Kondi and chips, and we ordered pizza, and we all sat around the table, and I think that was a different way to just...

Me: So you were able to immerse yourself with the other high school students, as opposed to...

Kerry: Yea.

Me: OK so it's a different way?

Kerry: Yea.

Me: So the big thing then is to engage in some way.

Kerry: Yeah, I think it was hard because it was a Friday night.

Me: Yeah you want to go out.

Kerry: Yeah. I think if it was a Thursday night we would have sat down with the family it would have been a different story probably. But I wish I would've spent more time. I guess getting to know the family itself because that's the reason we go to be a part of their life. I think we spent a lot of it just with the students, which is awesome. I love all the people of the exchange. I think they're amazing, but I but I think that wasn't the whole key part of it. It was also to sit down with the family and get to know them on their level, in the comfort of their own home.

Me: That's really awesome. I think that's a really good thought of yours. I guess the importance of that family time is that's where you really learn some of the ways they do things you really pick up on a lot of subtle stuff.

Kerry: And I think like family time is bigger there than it is here.

Me: Why do you think that is?

Kerry: Because I think they have, like how my partner laid out her schedule for me when we did the one thing in class. They have dinner every single night, and they said we just sit here and talk. Like no phones we just know what's going on in each other's lives. And I think in our society, especially nowadays, it's like you're running from practice to work to take your kids to practice to not even maybe having dinner that night, or stopping at Chick-fil-A on the road and not being able to sit down to know like how your day was. Like I don't really remember the last time like, my mom said it to me last night. It was so

sad. She was like, “Kerry you're constantly running. Like I was going to make you dinner and we could just hang out but like I was going out and I already had plans. So I felt bad, “so I'll go out with you tonight,” like tonight being Thursday. But she was like, 'cause I had like, I don't really know how my mom is exactly doing. I try to sit with her every night before we go to bed but it's like, what is that 10 minutes compared to that hour that they probably have over there?

Me: Is that something that you would like to incorporate, or could you?

Kerry: I definitely could. And I think it would be a better idea. And I think that's the problem with families nowadays is that they kinda have that barrier. Back then in the 50's, you sat down every night you have this type of family. And that's not really a thing most of the days because kids are constantly running, parents are constantly running and there's not this close behind is like a family much anymore.

Me: Right, so the first night you sat down with your family were you, Were you completely comfortable that situation? Did you have to think about what may be your role in that situation might be? What was that like?

Kerry: I don't really sit at dinner tables. Usually we just sit around at the on the couch, watch TV and talk about what's going on, on the TV, not what's going on in our lives. So I think that was kind of like a difference to me 'cause I'm sitting there and now what do I do? Now I've sat at a table when we go out to dinner, but this is their house. I need to watch what I'm saying. I don't know what's going to offend them. I don't know them like this. And I don't know like the manners they might have over here that we don't have at home. And I think I, the first like half an hour I was watching myself because I sit like this a lot and I like don't do that with somebody who doesn't know you. And I think that was something that kind of had to...

Me: Adjust to?

Kerry: Yeah

Me: So what's the difference between that first dinner and the final dinner? The last dinner you would have had with them. I don't know what night it would have been.

Kerry: I don't even know what night it was, but I remember it, I think it was more or less like they knew me now they knew my personality, and I knew their personalities. And by the time, like I knew my partner's personality when she was here, but I think I saw a different side of her over there, so I kind of learned that too. And having Julie there definitely helped me kinda break that just because I had someone else who understood what was going on at home, but also what was going on here, so I think I was more open to discussions like, I don't even know how this came up but we talk about politics and that was kind of like something I don't really talk about. And we didn't like decide which side we're on, like Republican or Democrat, but we kind of just talked about the differences between here and there and what they thought about the whole Trump and Hillary, and all the other stuff going on. And we were able to fill them in on stuff they didn't even know and they were able to teach me stuff I had absolutely zero idea about. They're Democratic but they have a Queen stuff, but I think I was more comfortable being able to talk about things without feeling like I was doing wrong or getting judged.

Me: Right so you had to go through the process in order to get comfortable and just keep figuring out you know, what that situation was like?

Kerry: Yeah

Me: That's interesting did any of your prior experiences influence your time in Denmark? whatever it might be? Not necessarily travel but it could be travel it could be anything.

Kerry: My aunt, they go to, my cousins go to a small private school, like 12 kids in a class, but a lot of the kids come from different countries. So over Thanksgivings, Christmases, and Easters they end up taking 2 or 3 kids in from, the last few were from the, which one is the bad Korea North or South?

Me: North

Kerry: South Korea, Cambodia, one girl from Barcelona. So I kinda, from the time I was 12 until like not this past year but the year before, that I was kind of able to see different cultures and how they celebrate like holidays I guess. And I was able to talk to this girl from South Korea and get to know her culture by her words. And the Cambodian girl, she was really quiet, but like, her too. Like I don't know what her name was from Barcelona but I got really close to her, and I still talk to her to this day. And I think I was kind of like able to like well I've talked about talking about wanting to experience going over there and experience the things over there so I can go do it over in Denmark so I think that kind of helped.

Me: So you already had that awareness of what cultural differences could look like before you even experience that.

Kerry: Yeah

Me: That's really interesting. I guess two more questions, just looking at the time here. But what overall can you take from this exchange? I mean going forward in your life.

Kerry: I think you have to understand people and not like just culturally, but like understand them. And I think like a lot of Americans we're to ourselves like, we do us like we don't really care about what Joe shmoe is doing over there. And like yeah, we have our opinions, but I just think I kind of created understanding for different people. Not just like their cultures and like from talking to my partner to talking to Brendan's partner, to talking to Bari's partner, and just like talking to every single one of them kind of allowed me to think like, OK I don't think this is OK, or maybe what they're doing isn't OK but there's a reason as to why they're doing it and there might be a reason why they're showing their emotions a certain way or why they're not. I think that has to do with culture especially, but it helped me being in a different country to understand everybody is completely different and that's OK. So I kind of think that.

Me: So I guess two things that you said there is really interesting. I mean that last point there about you had to go to a different country to learn that. So that was an insight that you had while there or when you got back about having to understand people?

Kerry: I think it was a little bit there and like definitely when I got back I think there I realized they might be the same age as me and might kind of live somewhat of the same lives but they're completely different to what they're doing. And I think when I got back, especially like I still talk to Brendan's partner every day. And I think just kind of seeing what he's doing with his life when we're not there now is creating an understanding like, oh this is why he did that when we were there. So I think it was kind of both ways. I think I learned different aspects when I was there but also when I came back.

Me: So let me ask you this. Why, you know in this school there are 1600 students in the school, not to mention number of people you come across at your job and other things you do. All those people are different in some way. Why do you think you had that insight on the exchange but maybe not just going through your day-to-day life here at school?

Kerry: I think because here I'm just used to it. This is just what I've known and this is where I'm from and I've lived here for 17 years, and these people I usually do see every day, you kind of form an opinion on. Or you hear about them in a different way and even though you might not know them, and you're like oh that person well he's not the nicest and whatever. And I think I came to realize that when we were over there like, I knew these people over here and I knew them over there and it was a complete different turn of events. They're different over here than they are over there and that's because they were in the comfort of their place. And I think a lot of people probably aren't comfortable over here so they acted a certain way. And I think that helped me realize that's just not who they are that's just the face they put on and that was kind of like to me that was like whoa, everybody is different in their own way. And everybody is not actually who they want to make themselves out to be.

Me: Is that something that you thought about since you've been back? And how has that in any way occupied your thoughts?

Kerry: I think it's like change the way how I even looked at my friends.

Me: Really?

Kerry: Yeah 'cause like my one, when we got back there wasn't any problems but it was kind of like breaking off in different scenarios and I think I was like, if I did go on this exchange I would have been like, well why are they acting that way like who are they to like act this way but I'm like OK, there's a reason as to why. And I feel like that's something that you should realize on a day-to-day basis not even being a part of the exchange, but like I think everybody has their moment where something clicks. And I think noticing the Danes here as compared to there with something that kind of made that click if that makes sense.

Me: No that does make sense. And kind of being in a different setting forces you to look at that. So next year Kerry, you're going to college. What do you take to college with this? I mean you're going to have roommate you don't know.

Kerry: I think going on this exchange will help me with the whole roommate thing just because when you're living with someone you have no idea about, you're going in with this mindset like, OK, is this person going to be rude? Are they going to be nice? Are they going to be a party girl? Am I going to have to like, are they going to have guys back to the room constantly? Am I gonna have to like, handle these certain situations? And I think like when my partner was over at my house I was scared of these same things. Not that she'd bring guys back but like, more or less will she be nice? Will she be nice? Will we get along? And I think like to me, that will help me understand that like one person like, the one way I might look at this person might be the complete opposite. And I need to give an open mind into it like I gave to going over there and the same as when I was living at my partner's house and she was probably like, "OK well I haven't seen her in 100-something days. Has anything changed?"

Me: Right

Kerry: And I think like, that will kind of help me and like the whole college thing like...

Me: It's scary.

Kerry: It is, and I think like, you kinda could put not like going to college and Denmark are the same, but it's more or less you're going to a new place.

Me: Right

Kerry: So it is the same in some way. And I think I will have to keep an open mind and sometimes my open mind shuts down and I'm like OK I'm going to do what I'm going to do, but I have to remember this is my Denmark here now.

Me: No that does make sense. It's a new experience. It's something you haven't been a part of before and you have to adjust to right? So it sounds like you're saying that adjustment is going to be easier because of...

Kerry: Being able to go somewhere else and experience something different.

Me: So there's a common, and maybe it is easier and maybe it's not, but there's a confidence in you?

Kerry: Yeah

Me: Can you elaborate on that?

Kerry: I think with me I've kind of been stuck in, I will say, my own world. Put my own area, but my own surroundings and what I've gotten used to. While I'd like to keep an open mind and I'd like to go explore things I'd also like to not. And I think only Denmark opened me up to a different aspect of that. Like going out and doing things, and going to a new place and although you might not belong, is something that you should do in life or you don't experience. And I think like going to college will be the same thing, like I can go in with an open mind or I cannot. And if I go in without an open mind then I probably will hate it, but if I go in with an open mind and I see the different aspects that this school brings Me then I'll be able to enjoy it I might not fit in, but I'll be able to learn something about myself just like I did over in Denmark.

Me: That's an awesome thought. Kerry thank you.

Appendix O: Jen Interview

Me: So Jen, tell me a little bit about your experience with the trip over to Denmark just highlights, low-lights, before we get into some of the questions.

Jen: Like anything in particular like aspects of it? Or just general everything?

Me: I don't know, what you like best? What did you like least? What caught your attention, good or bad?

Jen: I like the personal aspect of it where we're staying at their houses. Where like I've done some traveling with my family to other countries, but I was always the tourist in most cases. The closest I've ever been to this would have been when I went to Spain with my family, we stayed in an Air B&B, so it was more like in the general Spanish public, but like it was not the same thing as like actually interacting with them and learning about their customs through them. It was more of just watching as like, I went through the markets and like that kind of thing being able to ask them questions and get to know them, and like, the way they view things to give me a different perspective then if I was just looking at them and trying to guess what they were thinking.

Me: So it's kind of like the difference between looking at the fish bowl and actually being the fish is what you're saying?

Jen: Yes.

Me: That's cool. So tell me about your trip to Spain and what that was like, and then any of your other travel experience.

Jen: So it was only a short weekend. My mom was going there for work, and so we tagged along because I took Spanish and they just want me to see more of the world I guess. I've done traveling throughout my life, mostly car rides along the East Coast, but I've been to California, Alaska, Hawaii, been to Canada and London.

Me: Those are some pretty cool places.

Jen: Yeah, I've always enjoyed it and so the traveling part is the time difference. I'm kind of familiar with that and like, I wasn't freaked about that part I was more concerned about school work.

Me: The school work here? Or the school work over there?

Jen: The schoolwork here, and like missing class, but travel-wise it was nice to be with someone who is very familiar with where they were going versus trying to figure it out 'cause that's always a stressful part. It's like trying to figure out where you're going when you have no one really other than if you stop and ask a local which can be intimidating.

Me: Oh it definitely can be. So overall how would you look at the difference between I mean, those travel experience with your family, and you're going to Spain, go to London going to Hawaii, going to Alaska, and those are all very different places than where we are here. How did these experiences compare to this experience? I mean you say you like the personal aspect of this.

Jen: So my family goes to a lot of national parks, so that would always be a key part of when we choose locations so my mom and I have vacationed just the two of us every winter vacation. One time and we specifically chose an area with multiple national parks that we went to and so it's always about the location of where we're going, not necessarily to learn about the people that are there, so it's more historical lens. So going Kroneborg was

much closer than what I would have done with my family then going to Tivoli. And just seeing the place that they go and hang out like, the malls and all that.

Me: So that's really cool. So you got that really immersive experience?

Jen: Like how they spend their days versus what does their historic stuff look like.

Me: So did you feel that you got to see as much historical stuff as well? Or do you feel that you missed out on anything since that's the way you're used to traveling?

Jen: Not really because we did go to Kroneborg. And also my partner took me to see the Round Tower as we were walking around to explain some of the history. She would explain what was it, King Christian?

Me: Yeah.

Jen: And we were able to the parliament building, so there was some historical aspects but mixed in with that she talked about how it's changed and like, how they view those things and less of this is what it was, and more of this is what it was plus this is where it's been since then. More big picture than just this one instance.

Me: So you see you get to experience Denmark as she experienced it is what you're saying? Or she gives you the Danish perspective?

Jen: The Danish perspective in how it's significant to them, not just the significance history in general 'cause like, if you look at European history, and world history, we don't really talk about Denmark, so like how it was important to them as to how these things happen. I wouldn't have heard that otherwise.

Me: That's really cool Jen. So Jen, going into this trip, can you tell me about some of your general openness to new experiences? And also being around people with different attitudes, different beliefs.

Jen: My best friend is Jewish, and we've always had that kind of relationship where we can talk about anything with religion and the differences and even sometimes things that can be controversial between the two of them we will discuss. So I've always been able to have these conversations with people and then also try new things. I join color-guard in my freshman year during the indoor season which is a little bizarre, like that doesn't normally happen for band kids. And I end up switching and I'm the color-guard captain so like I do put myself in those positions where I like to try things. So that was what made this exchange more fun, doing it in a way that I hadn't done before it's not an activity it's more related to people.

Me: Ok, so what do you think that attitude that got you to want to do color guard and switching from band how did that affect you on this trip? I mean did it affect you?

Jen: Change the word choice I used when I was communicating with my partner like, trying to make sure she understood I wasn't trying to be offensive by my questions I just had general curiosity and making sure she understood that I wasn't trying to be, and so that changed the way we communicate.

Me: Oh that's interesting, can you give an example?

Jen: I think we're talking about politics. She came here I asked her, "So I heard you guys have strong opinions about her politics because it affects your country as well." And she was like, they told them not to talk about Trump because they knew that we were very polarized with that, and I said "It's fine First off my family isn't super fond of him so don't worry about that." But like we're also fine if she had talked about it with my family

and what's going on in their country. She was talking about how her parents would then be taking sides in their opinions.

Me: So you guys dug in deep when you're talking to each other which is great.

Jen: We talked a lot in our free time.

Me: How long did it take to get to that point where you felt really comfortable? I mean, talking politics can be a pretty personal issue. So how long into the trip did you feel pretty comfortable?

Jen: In Denmark it is really quick because we had already communicated, and I've already met her. In America it was a little slower, but we reach out a lot to each other so it wasn't just brief, here's a little snippet of my beliefs. It was paragraphs basically, so we got to know each other better in that sense, so we already knew the basic questions and were able to expand upon that almost immediately once we got comfortable between us so it didn't take that long I think.

Me: So did you communicate a lot throughout the year?

Jen: So by the time we got to Denmark, we'd sent back and forth over 100 emails.

Me: Really?

Jen: Yeah.

Me: So you guys were really familiar by the time we got there?

Jen: And when she was there I still ask her questions like, that's when I found out about her family 'cause I was asking how it compared and stuff like that.

Me: That's really cool. So that has to make it a little easier I think to enter someone's home when you can take that time to get familiar with someone before you get there. Did you notice any difference between you know, you and your partner and other people who didn't communicate as much in between?

Jen: I don't know, because about the people didn't really communicate. I know there's a set of partners who didn't really talk. You know who I'm talking about.

Me: Yeah.

Jen: Well I didn't really talk to either one of them, so I don't know but the different relationships I notice between the different partners had more to do with personality and the type of people that they are, so the more outgoing people were like more talkative but maybe not as deep topics just like all sorts of variations on a range of things.

Me: But your experience was that you got down to that deeper level of trying to understand her and beyond just...

Jen: Because I think we both wanted to. We wanted to understand each other better and I think that's all it takes is the mindset of both sides.

Me: Both sides being open?

Jen: That and willing, you might say, "Yeah I'm open to it and really not make an effort."

Me: Well it's great that they took that attitude into the exchange. If that helps you learn a lot, and it seems like you feel you did learn a lot from your partner, that's great. So while we were there I'm sure there are things that you encountered, which are different than what we're used to here, whether it be a routine of doing something, the way of talking. I'm sure there's various things large and small but did you experience any type of resistance to new cultural elements?

Jen: Maybe like, the stereotypes a bit with how you guys said that they come across as very cold. I didn't personally experience that, but like I asked them if they had ideas about American things, like feel free to tell me. I won't be offended by them. I want to know. I want to know how the rest of world views us. I don't know that, and like, I tried to try things and hear them out. And if I was confused about something, ask them, 'cause I know they think it's normal all these things that I thought it was normal and then here's my partner saying, "Wow this is amazing!" And I'm like, "This is very normal for me, what are you talking about?" So I try to keep in mind that it of course. We're going to grow up differently so if I don't understand something, ask.

Me: Is there anything you did understand better that you can think of?

Jen: I don't know. How like forthcoming they are with their families, like her family, like her brother, and her cursing at the dinner table. And having like, very joking conversations with their parents. And they explain that that was their *hygge*, like that was what made them comfortable to each other was that ability to joke around and not be as like, you have to have a certain level of respect to them. Like being respectful, do you appreciate who they are? And I didn't understand that because I'm used to it more, you have to have respect for your parents or else I get yelled at. No cursing. No profanity.

Me: So do you feel you could have jumped into those conversations as they had them? Or would that have been too much for you?

Jen: I mean little jokes here and there. I caught on their inside joke that anytime they had dinner and they were confused about a conversation topic her dad would plot his phone and say, "Go to Google." So I started to join in on that part 'cause they did make an effort to speak in English so I appreciated that. So a lot of it was in English so I was able to understand the joke a little

Me: So they made it more welcoming?

Jen: Yeah, and if they did switch to Danish after the conversation they turned to me and explained the shortened version of it.

Me: Did you and your partner have a conversation about those, about that joking attitude that they have?

Jen: Yeah we had it one time when we were going to get dinner in the car.

Me: How'd that come up?

Jen: I was telling her that I was just amazed that she was able to have that joking relationship with her family, and she was like, she does it with her friends and the rest of the family for the most part.

Me: Interesting so were there any specific activities customs, or experiences, from the entire exchange, whether it was with the school, or away from school, that may have made you feel a little uncomfortable, not like uncomfortable necessarily, like this is the worst thing ever, but differences between what's going on here or something that may have made you feel really uncomfortable.

Jen: From the group sessions we came up with the same thing about not having things planned super in advance.

Me: Tell me about that.

Jen: I come from a family where my mom specifically puts in free time in our schedules for vacations. That is a specific, like there's nothing planned if we want to go do something,

or just go rest, we can. So it made me a little like, I wanted to do something and like 'cause I don't know if I'll ever get to go back to Denmark. Like, so I want to make the most of my experience. That made me very on edge especially that first weekend we went to Sweden and there were some problems with trying to figure out how to get the whole group, because we all randomly ran into each other, and there's this group of like 40 of us, and that was very stressful because I don't mind being around a lot of people but the groups trying to make decisions is the worst.

Me: It doesn't happen very easily.

Jen: So just trying to get everyone to move was just...

Me: So as we went through the week, did you experience any change with your feelings towards that just, Danish "we'll take it as it is."

Jen: After my first initial experience I tried to remind myself like, stop doing that it's OK, they've got this. But it's hard to break that habit that's been in there my whole life, but I tried to make the conscious effort. And I think I came back home feeling that it was more OK to be OK with change. I don't know how significant was but I think there's something there.

Me: But there is an awareness, not necessarily that that behavior has changed, and maybe it has, maybe hasn't, but there's an awareness there of that. I mean do you see that translating to anything else in your life? Is that a thought since we have been home, you know regarding something of a similar nature with scheduling?

Jen: I don't know. I don't make a lot of plans with my friends. I don't have free time, but maybe considering like when it comes to summertime trying to make an effort to make those plans would not be super set, on this date I'm going to meet with my friends and maybe something like that.

Me: I think it's interesting what you've said. You haven't been able to think about that because you've been too busy.

Jen: Yeah catching up in AP, exams coming up, I've not really had time

Me: Do you wish we had over here, more of an attitude like they have. or do you see that as being stressful in its own way?

Jen: because the way I've grown up I'm more likely to view it as stressful, but I acknowledge that the life I lead is very stressful. I mean, based off the interactions I've had with students at Stem, East, and a bit of West, we're very stressed out because we're like, we're doing all these things we don't have the time for, and having those kids be like, I'm running out of time, and the Danes being the exact opposite, and they have so much free time. And I think neither is particularly good because then they're like, I feel like they could be doing more like they don't do much after school activities, and I'm like for me that's a huge part of who I am in high school. That's become important to me, maybe doing it in a way where you could have more free time, like I could have a break. I'm not stressing out over homework. I could just have a few hours to myself. I can go hang out with friends. I don't have to be like, oh my God this awful assignment, because that's what would often happen, and we do have a chance to get together and just complain about "Oh my God I have this major assignment coming up and I'm freaking out like I'm gonna miss it and do badly."

Me: That's a lot that's a lot to take on.

Jen: So maybe less stressful if less stuff, but not completely nothing.

Me: It's alright, I mean we're only there for 10 days but it sounds like you really have an awareness of just those differences. Had that been something you'd ever thought about before we left? Or is that something that while we were there, it kind of came up like, "Oh wow come to think of it?"

Jen: Not the whole thing about their scheduling. I didn't know that part of it I knew cultures were different. I don't know how because like I've learned about different cultures. Little bits that like, in Asia they are known for having high regard and respect for different levels of status, and showing that in different ways than I would. In English we don't have a different way of me speaking to adults other than using mister and miss or sir and mam. And maybe elevated language choices, but there's no different way of like, forming words, and like I wouldn't know how to do that language because of that difference but then when it comes to interacting with them, I was trying to make an effort to make sure that I'm trying to be respectful in a way they would understand because I know I don't have that already I've just never known how to do it until I go there and experience it.

Me: That's interesting. So you talk about learning about different cultures, like in school, and from some of your classes, how did this experience being in Denmark compare to those experiences in school learning about culture?

Jen: Going through school I'm always gonna have the American perspective of well that's what we wouldn't do, that's what they would do. Instead of just going in and, this is the way we do things, and it just so happens it's different, but it works for us instead of viewing it, as I don't know if they mean to do this, but every time I read textbooks, there's always slight negative attitude towards, this is the wrong way. Like it's supposed to be objective, but because it's usually American writing they have slight negative attitudes that sometimes comes through, and it bothers me slightly because it's not the worst thing. I mean if it's a dictator it's not good, but other things it's like I don't know, like Islam, we have this, I've grown up with, there's always been this Islamophobia because since I was born after 9/11. But then like I learned about the religion in school and I was like, oh it's a good religion, like my best friend, one of my friends is like it's actually better than the ones we have right now, because they put more on the morals and she likes their morals, but we focus so much on those negative sides that hurt the Americans, that we forget to look at the rest of its good. But school gave me the opportunity to look at it. Like this is what they look for like, yes they do this one thing differently that we find weird, but they have the same good base that we have.

Me: That's interesting. I mean it's really interesting to look at. So how does being in that culture, so you've clearly got a lot out of class, and you've had some experiences where you know learning about Islam that has affected your perspective or at least forced you to look at someone else's perspective how did this relate being in Denmark? As opposed to being in the classroom learning about Denmark?

Jen: I think it wasn't just being told that this is what they do differently it's just, this is what we do it just happens to be different, where like, they were just showing me their normal life instead of pointing out the parts of their life that were different than mine. So it looks at it like you take a step back and you just look at everything instead pinpointing little things and learning a lot about those details.

Me: So you get to pick the details you want to focus on instead of being told these are the details you're supposed to focus on. When you actually get to see it, that's interesting. It's really cool. You've been really perceptive on this trip that's really cool. Was there anything while we were there that seemed really comfortable to you? Like any customs, any activities and experiences that you looked at and you were like, "You know what I'm going to be OK. I fit right in with this stuff."

Jen: So one night my partner and I got invited over to another student and her partner's house and a few others were also there, and experiencing that hygge. And like that conversation was a really fun night. And like, getting to talk to each other about our own experiences and like, not being in a big group, and like, talking about things over dinner. And the foods they were eating. It was really fun. So that idea of hygge, that's literally the main takeaway.

Me: You like that whole experience?

Jen: I like that idea of making it homey and comfortable. That idea will incorporate more in my life coming out of this.

Me: How so?

Jen: I don't know. I'm still in my own home, so I don't have that much control over that type of stuff. But when I do like, get my own house and start to decorate it and choose what I want to do with it, I'll keep that in mind and make it represent that part of me.

Me: So that's a part of you that you feel like may have developed over there?

Jen: Yeah.

Me: Is there a way to incorporate the social aspect of hygge, just the decorating aspect but the interactive part of it?

Jen: I don't know. Maybe just acknowledging in my own family. How we have a bit of it but we just never caught that, because we don't have that word.

Me: So you're aware like, now when you think back and you're aware of, "Hey my family does this, this, and this, which is hygge," and it falls in line with that.

Jen: Yeah a little bit, not really but.

Me: In its own way right?

Jen: Yeah.

Me: That's cool that you picked up on it. You talked a little bit at the beginning about you, like that personal aspect of living in someone else's home, can you describe a little bit about what your partner's home is like to start off? Or what that experience was when you go in? What types of things did you notice, but you mentioned how they interact, but what did you notice about how the house was run and maybe how that compares to what you're used to?

Jen: There's a lot more like, we could go to our rooms and like, kinda be away for a while. They knew that I had my homework, but sometimes just to go there for a little bit. And like they didn't really bother you or anything like my parents. If I go to my room for too long my parents will come down. They didn't seem to have that attitude, like they're doing chores around the house, it's more of like, "Oh I'm not doing anything do you need help with something?" so that was different.

Me: That was more of again, that un-structuredness that you're seeing all over the place.

Jen: Versus that expectation that you're supposed to contribute.

Me: Contribute at all times. Do something at all times, or you're not doing anything.

Jen: Yep.

Me: So then, what are the biggest takeaways from that from that aspect of it? And then just in general, living in someone else's house. What's the biggest takeaway? Positive and negative.

Jen: Maybe look at what I value for the interactions with people. So like I liked that they were able to have that, it's not really an adult looking down on the kid. There's more evenness. There's some like, her parents have obviously more knowledge, and can explain things but it was more, I thought respectful. Not to say that my parents are disrespectful, but sometimes it feels like they think they're better than me because they have this perspective you know. I'm talking about something I learned in school that they haven't covered in 20 years, so that idea that they will always be right because they're the adult versus here's what I remember learning, let's look into that. That's something I find important. I don't like having that dynamic. I would prefer the more even dynamic.

Me: What about specifically did you like having that even dynamic?

Jen: I just don't like people thinking they're better than others. I just never liked that type of people.

Me: It's a big thing.

Jen: So it gave me another way to think about how to approach that, 'cause I've lived my life the way I have. I've never known really how other people do it, so to see that I'm like, Oh I like more of that.

Me: You can get exposed to different ways of doing things that may be better, may be worse, maybe not, maybe just different. Right, that's interesting. So overall, what's that experience like to stay in someone's house versus on your other trips to like, Spain to London, staying in hotel.

Jen: I think the interactions you have, I don't know like, going on the train I didn't feel as uncomfortable like I had someone to talk to outside my family versus, I know we went on the tube when we went to London so like, just kind of glancing around and like not understanding everything that was going on around me. But like, I mean, it was easier because their speaking English so I could hear them explaining things, but like, it versus Denmark, I don't know. I could ask her questions about her culture, like things that people were doing. Like the fact that you can talk to each other on the train which I was like, you don't even like, you just sit down, you don't even ask, "Hey, can I sit here?" which is something I'm used to seeing. But if I was a tourist, I would just be like, huh but I wouldn't ask anyone 'cause I'm not going to some stranger that like, that's out of character for me.

Me: See, I almost feel like you had to use another analogy instead of looking through window like that. Windows open for you to actually get inside, or looking through the glass door what not. While you were over there, what were the experiences like when you had other Americans around? Did that affect your comfort level in any way?

Jen: More often than not, it made me uncomfortable because I was used to the dynamic between me and my partner, and then I felt worried that some of the things the Americans were saying would bother or like offend the Danes. 'Cause like, at one point someone was asking her partner to like, say American words, and kind of laughing at their

pronunciation. I was like I'm not going to pretend I'm amazing at my own language. I didn't know if like, things they would say like Americans they would say without thinking. At the end of the night, I would turn to her and be like, I couldn't tell if based on the Danes' reactions where you guys bothered by that? 'Cause like, I was personally bothered because I thought that was mean to them to do that to them.

Me: So it's a sensitivity that you have to that?

Jen: I don't know. I guess it depends on who you talk to. Like I like to take that into consideration that some people don't even know to think about it.

Me: I mean again just like I said before, that's a perceptive way of looking at it. It's an interesting thought. Do you think prior experiences you have had, influenced your time in Denmark? Not just travel experiences but any experience, was there anything that maybe set up for a lens for how you saw Denmark?

Jen: A little bit, because I've been to Europe so I know a little bit more about the European lifestyle. Like not like the little details, but like but going to London and seeing how they move around and like, do transportation and like, being familiar with what they're used to being able to just take public transportation anywhere 'cause that changes the way you live your life. You're able to go farther without the need of a personal car. That causes you to have the responsibility to be able to drive yourself versus the responsibility being able to swipe a card to let you go places. I mean it took some getting used to but like, since I had to deal with going to take the tube that idea of taking a card was like, OK just need to refresh my memory.

Me: So you've kinda had that experience?

Jen: So it made moving around easier and like a bit of the cultural thing, because they have similar histories so the things that are important to the way I've grown up, they haven't necessarily experienced. Like, their longer history. The idea of them being a 200-year old building isn't a reason for celebration.

Me: Not like it is here, definitely not.

Jen: They're like, "Oh well, look at that, it's falling apart, but it's OK." And we're like, so excited, don't touch.

Me: Exactly. Well now it's one of those things like, there's too many old buildings they're just, there like, when you get the 1000-year old buildings or 500-year old buildings, that's when it starts getting more special definitely. Did you have any interactions with anything else, such as I know you've mentioned some of the political views but, any pop culture views while we were there? Did you interact with that aspect of Danish society at all?

Jen: Not really, but I mean, talking to them about their favorite artists a bit. Mainly just my partner, but they talked about there's some festival or something works like Coachella kind of I guess, like their version of it, and who she's excited to see and how much pride they have that Lukas Graham became so popular in America, which they pay a lot of attention to our industry. So the fact that one of their artists made it into our industry and was topping charts was like, they're super proud of it. They're like yeah, Lukas Graham is Danish. that's a Danish band, like they were super proud to tell me that, but then they're also surprised by like how much they listen to Danish artists and have a lot of Danish influence in European music. The EDM is much more popular, uh cafeteria!

Me: Yeah, all the music in the cafeteria!

Jen: But then, they also knew a lot of the famous artist that I'm familiar with.

Me: Did you get exposed to any bands or anything or listen to any while we were there?

Jen: Some individual songs that I still listen to.

Me: So you like them?

Jen: Yeah, I've listened to more Lukas Graham.

Me: Did you know Lukas Graham before?

Jen: I knew the name but I didn't know it was Danish until she told me or the fact that it wasn't a guy it was a band, like little things like that. I was like, I never even thought to look into that because like his English is so good I was like oh, he must be from Canada or something. Just different accent I can't identify it but then realizing there's so many artists out there and they only sing in English and it blows my mind since they have so many People learning English that the artists do that it's normal. And I was like, we can't even really handle Spanish music and it's like the one per year, and that's our song.

Me: Well that's fun!

Jen: But that's only just the music part.

Me: Yeah but that's like, a really authentic experience. Was there anything else in terms of pop culture that you felt exposed to?

Jen: I mean I did watch "Fantastic Beasts" with her family, and it was interesting to watch the subtitles and just as you're watching the movie. I've already seen it but like, me reacting to it, I was just realizing how much quicker I was reacting to it than they were because it takes them a minute to understand what's going on in the scene which I mean, they're watching it in subtitles so like...

Me: Because they have to read it and then react.

Jen: But like, they're so good at English, that like I kept forgetting that I was like, "Oh my God! Tell me if I'm going too fast. Tell me if you want me to slow down." But they're like, "It's fine, we understand what you're saying." But that was the easiest part. I was worried about being able to communicate, and it turned out they were really good at English. And even if they didn't have the exact word they could explain enough and I'm like, "Oh I know exactly what you mean. I know what you're trying to say."

Me: So you have that area that you're worried about going over there. It turned out not to be that much of an issue and there's like a comfort as well that sets in from that. That must have been a fun movie night with them, I mean, if you have seen the movie. Do they do that often?

Jen: Not like super often. I think there's one or two other nights they were sitting around watching TV together.

Me: That's really nice. Do you guys sit around and watch TV at home?

Jen: Yes.

Me: Ok.

Jen: My mom and my brother are up till like, midnight every night eating popcorn together and watching TV shows.

Me: Oh that's fun. So that was kind of a similarity?

Jen: Yeah.

Me: Now Jen, you've touched on this a little bit throughout this conversation, but going forward in your life, what, if anything, can you take from this exchange experience? You know, as you march on down the road?

Jen: Well in college, and considering taking such study abroad, and if I was to follow that, this gives me the ability to know how to approach situations better, and not be so hesitant. So like, it'll take away some of that stress of telling someone of another culture like, I'll be like, I've already experienced that. It will be a different experience, but I know how to kind of navigate it a little more than if I was just, if I've never been to another country. Here I'm going to go experience their culture.

Me: So you know to expect when you get into that culture I mean, you mentioned going to college, but what about go to college and being around people that you haven't been around before?

Jen: Yeah um 'Cause when I go to college I'll interact with people from all over the United States. I think it's going to be the ability to try and ask like, why they do things the way they do, instead of just being like, that's weird. Making that difference like why is it different? Or how's it different? Just like changing the reaction I have. I guess trying to make it more positive.

Me: So not having reaction judgment, but inquiry?

Jen: Trying to refrain myself being judgmental yeah.

Me: Do you think this exchange helped develop that attitude, or is that something you had before you left?

Jen: I mean, maybe a bit before I left, but this really like, helped move that more towards that. Because I could see from a bit of the experience I had there that just because it's different, doesn't mean it's weird. Because to them, it's normal, and seeing that made me think OK, there's nothing wrong with that versus if I'm just in my comfort zone in America being told this is the way they do things, and me feeling weird about it. But like, because I was there, and they told me about it, it makes it easier to be less judgmental, and like OK, that's the way you think you do things.

Me: Yeah, I know exactly what you mean. It's like you see how they are in their house. You see how they are at school. You see how they interact out in public. There's definitely things that you know, maybe aren't the ways you have done things but, you see OK this can work as well, you know? Is that what you're saying?

Jen: Yeah.

Me: That's cool. Was there any, before we finish up with this, was there any particular experience or interaction that kind of clicked for you? Or is there an example of that for you?

Jen: I don't know. I can't think of any. That's so long ago. I've horrible memory haha.

Me: Jen, you've come up with a lot of really good stuff since we've been here. The last thing I'll ask and this is not really what's on here but how would you rate the experience from one to ten?

Jen: I would say nine, because you're never going to be perfect, but I feel like I've learned a lot from it and I really enjoyed it and took a lot out of it. It makes me excited travel more!

Me: So if someone came to you and said, "Listen Jen, I'm thinking about doing the Danish Exchange, but I'm not sure if I want to do it." What would your elevator pitch be then?

Jen: Well first I'd ask them what about it makes them nervous. 'Cause if it's something like language barrier or cultural barrier, then I could change how it's going. But I'd talk about how it's if you make an effort to communicate and really understand them they have no problems with doing that for the most part, 'cause it's a two-way street, you know. You both have to make an effort but then also, they've learned that their influence may not be what we do as Americans, especially in the pop culture area, but sometimes you can take a step out of your comfort zone and see how other people do things, 'cause we're so used to doing it our way that you have to see it another way to appreciate it.

Me: That's a really good quote to end that on Jen. Thank you very much. I really appreciate you taking the time and glad you got to take part in this.

Jen: I enjoyed it.

Me: Good

Appendix P: Kristen Interview

Me: So the only people that are going to hear this are myself and my advisor, and then eventually probably a second advisor. Um, once everything goes into the final dissertation it's going to be, you're going to be an anonymous student with a pseudonym.

Kristen: Oh, that's cool.

Me: Um, if you want to pick your pseudonym, I can pick as well.

Kristen: Ok

Me: Uh, but I mean like I said in Denmark, I want you to be honest and to the point of just tell me what you felt what you thought. Not so much what you think I want to hear for this because anything is actually good information. So I guess the first thing is I know it's been a couple weeks I mean, like, when did we get back from Denmark,

Kristen: Yea, like April.

Me: Yeah like the beginning of April. Um, it has been a while, but tell me about your overall experience in Denmark.

Kristen: It was so amazing.

Me: Ok, Why?

Kristen: Um, well, like it was fun traveling with my friends from school, so I think like that part made it really cool. But then, I really liked my partner, I liked mine and Jamie's partner, we got along really well, the four of us.

Me: Now with your partner, were you guys communicating a lot before you left or was it just kinda when you got there you just took things as they were?

Kristen: It was just when I got there, we like didn't talk too much like, we were just like, "oh I'm excited for you to come" and like that kinda thing, but like, we didn't really talk before she came or I came.

Me: So what was your absolute favorite part?

Kristen: Um, that's so hard, honestly, all of it. But I think, oh, it's hard to like think back to what I did every day.

Me: Or, how about this, is there an aspect, was there an aspect of being over there that you feel was really beneficial to you? Not just a specific event or conversation but just some aspect of being over there?

Kristen: I think it was really beneficial, to be off in the city by myself. Like not knowing where am. Like not knowing really anything about where I was, and like, figuring it out. Like being comfortable with not being in control.

Me: Can you go into that? So you're comfortable not being in control, like being in the city on your own, like what does all that mean?

Kristen: So like, I'm not a city person and when we do go into Philadelphia, I like, we're following my brother, I don't know like, I know where I'm going I know where I am. And for me I like to know, what's the plan. So like, just being like, go with the flow, and like, experiencing something for what it is and not like, trying to figure out what to do next.

Me: That's interesting, so did you, were you worried about that happening going over, was that something you anticipated, or something you didn't even think about?

Kristen: Um, I like didn't think about it because I was like whatever happens, happens, so I was just like kinda the whole thing, let's see what happens. I wasn't really worried about it.

Me: So what did you guys do when you went into Copenhagen?

Kristen: We went shopping, lot of shopping. Then we did the boat tour, like the canals.

Me: Oh right, how was that?

Kristen: That was so cool, the houses so like, that was so fun. Then we did, what did we do? I think that's it. We did Tivoli.

Me: That's right, you went the last day with everybody?

Kristen: Yea, that was fun.

Me: That was cool, that was the first time we got to do that, this year.

Kristen: That's so amazing.

Me: Did you go on the rides or just walk around.

Kristen: I like signed up for a ride, like me and Kerry, we like got a ticket, or we thought we got a ticket we waited in line and got up to the thing and they said "you don't have a ticket," so we went back down and were like, no more rides.

Me: You didn't even go on one then?

Kristen: No! Cause we'd have to wait in another line, and it wasn't worth it.

Me: Oh, gotcha. We went on a roller coaster at the end of the night before we left, and that was pretty fun.

Kristen: I heard the roller coasters were good.

Me: Yea well we went on the old one, like the smaller one, that had the mountain there. It was pretty cool.

Kristen: That would be fun.

Me: It was fun! I guess the first think I want to know is was this your first experience travelling? Like before going.

Kristen: We went to Italy the year before.

Me: Ok, with your family?

Kristen: As a family, yea,

Me: Ok, and how did this compare to that trip?

Kristen: I think it was a lot better, and like, I don't know, like meeting with the people from the country was a lot easier.

Me: So you didn't do that in Italy?

Kristen: Well we did. My brother like, studied abroad, so we visited him. And he was like fine, but like, the people didn't like us. Like they really didn't like us in Italy.

Me: Really?

Kristen: And I don't know why.

Me: Ok

Kristen: Cause we're like an Italian family I don't look Italian but we look Italian, I don't know, it was just really odd.

Me: What do you think it was? What do you think the difference was?

Kristen: I think it was just being with someone from the country and like, kinda knowing a lot more about it before I came. Maybe they're just nicer.

Me: Did you, did you feel a difference between in that trip versus going to Denmark did see a difference in like types of things that activities that you were doing

Kristen: Um, yea we did a lot more Touristy things in Italy versus like in Denmark we did a lot of things my partner would do on like a regular weekend. So it was a lot more like, I don't know, I don't know the word, but like, regular life for them.

Me: Ok, so what was the difference then in those two experiences then doing the touristy things in Italy, versus doing that that regular life of your partner?

Kristen: It was cool, it was really cool, because just felt like you were at home, like hanging out with your friends, but sometimes you were like, oh we're in Denmark.

Me: That's interesting feeling like it was like your home like the thinking it was just you think you're in another country or you're comfortable where you were. What do you mean by that?

Kristen: Yea, it was just comfortable, Like I was very like, it was just fun, so I was like, I don't know, it was just normal, it felt very like, normal. I was like at ease. Because it was like you had a home there, even though it wasn't home-home, but you had your family, and you had your home. So it kinda just felt like you were going out. You always had a nice place to come back to. Does that make sense?

Me: Yea, no, it does make sense. Did that impact, maybe, your understanding of maybe the culture in Denmark? I mean do you still feel you got an exposure to that? Or was the comfort level just you know, to the point where that wasn't even a thought on your mind?

Kristen: No I definitely did get exposure to Denmark, for sure. Like it was just um, I really did, yea, I think we did, because we did Copenhagen, we went to all these different places, but for me I like to like at the end of the day doing something to come home, and like relax, so like, it was really good, balance I think. But I definitely got to see Denmark, and experience it

Me: Ok, so before this experience, how would you feel, like how could you describe your general openness, your thoughts, your feelings, towards new experiences or being around people with different viewpoints and lifestyles and attitudes and all that? Um, how was that before we traveled?

Kristen: Um I think it was really, I don't know I think I'm a really open person. I meet a lot of people from all over the world. Like my friends are from all over the world. So I think it was pretty tolerant and accepting.

Me: So did that so that make a difference being in that setting?

Kristen: I think so, yea. So like meeting new people was kinda the coolest thing. It was just like, oh its just different, but I don't know. What was the question?

Me: No, that was it, just your openness to new experiences and also, I should have said this in the beginning, but if there's like, you know, I'll ask you some other questions as you can see here, but if there's something that kinda sounds interesting or you say something that sounds interesting feel free to elaborate on anything. Um, obviously but I guess you have that travel experience, but did you travel within the United States before? Was Italy the first time you were out of country actually?

Kristen: Um, except for Canada.

Me: Okay.

Kristen: I went to Canada.

Me: Ok, were did you go in Canada?

Kristen: Uh, Niagra Falls.

Me: Oh nice, ok, that's fun.

Kristen: It was really fun. I like to travel. We've been to Florida.

Me: You've been to Florida?

Kristen: Yea?

Me: Ok, then all those are trips you do with your family?

Kristen: Yea.

Me: Did you enjoy traveling without your family?

Kristen: Oh yea, oh my gosh yea.

Me: Why?

Kristen: It was so different I felt like, cause if you're with your family you have other people you need to be like, responsible for. Not like responsible for, but like you're connected to them I guess.

Me: Yea.

Kristen: So like, you can't like, leave them, I don't know, it was kind of nice to be like, independent, like just worry about myself. Like, just myself. So like, that was cool, the independence.

Me: I mean, I like that, that is kinda nice. So you're independent over there you have these feelings of independence. You obviously enjoyed what you're experiencing is what you've said already so far, but were there any cultural elements that felt some type of resistance to you, such as like something that wasn't necessarily, it could've been something you didn't like or something that you might have been a little, somewhat uncomfortable with at all? Like did anything, does anything stand out to you?

Kristen: I'm trying to think. Um no, 'cause I felt pretty comfortable, I know that in the beginning I was not excited to ride my bike to school, because of the weather and everything. But once we did it I was like wow, this was amazing, I wish we did it at home.

Me: Why didn't you want to ride your bike?

Kristen: Um like, cause in the morning I'm tired and I feel like...

Me: It's a good way to wake up!

Kristen: It was, it really was, it definitely changed my mind. But like I was like, that's the last thing I want to do, especially when it was rainy and cold, cause like that's not so fun.

Me: Um, yea I wouldn't want to ride in the rain and cold. Jakob does that. So was there anything that occurred while we are over there that you experienced while over there that you had to take a step back and say alright that's different than try and make sense of something being different to try and understand something being different?

Kristen: Trying to think, um, I like, don't remember, I don't think there was anything that was too crazy, um, I like can't think of anything. I mean in Copenhagen, we were like, fine with the crowds, but they were freaked out about it.

Me: Who was?

Kristen: The Danes, they were like...

Me: What crowds?

Kristen: Well, in Copenhagen it was like a really nice day, and that was like normal for us because it's like a city like, that's fine, but they were like, sorry it's so crowded we feel so bad, and they're like it's so overwhelming. But we didn't even notice it.

Me: But you didn't feel that way?

Kristen: I guess that's the opposite, but yea.

Me: No that's fine, um, were there what were like what are the things that seem to be the most comfortable? What sort of activities, customs or experiences, cultural elements that you experienced that you were like, ok this is just like what I'm used to home this is what I like?

Kristen: Um, when we did Hygge, and like going out and shopping with our friends, that was cool. And yea, like just sitting and watching tv, and eating dinner with my family, that was really fun.

Me: Did you have dinner with your family every night?

Kristen: We did it twice, out of the whole week.

Me: You did not twice?

Kristen: We did twice

Me: You did twice, ok.

Kristen: Mostly we ate out with other people, or like, me and Jamie and our partners ate together, like just the four of us.

Me: Okay that's fun, so I mean with your family what was the experience like with your host family?

Kristen: They were so nice.

Me: Really?

Kristen: So cool, they like, so the parents lived in Washington DC for a few years, and he worked for the US government, so it was like, they just know a lot about America, so nothing was too odd, but they were just so smart, and really in tune with what was going on in America.

Me: What do you mean?

Kristen: So like they told me about the Iraq war, and they were telling me all of this stuff that I had no idea about America, like their part in it, and like just the history of like, Denmark and America. It was just really cool.

Me: Now what was it like being someone else's home I mean for 10 days?

Kristen: Weird, I'm definitely like, I feel like I'm really polite, so I felt like I was really up tight, so I didn't want to put anything down in the wrong spot and didn't wear my shoes in the house. So like it wasn't as comfortable as I can be at home, but I definitely got more comfortable.

Me: What was it that helped you to get more comfortable being there?

Kristen: I think like talking to like Freia and her mom and just hanging out with the family and like after like, 10 days you have to leave your toothbrush in the bathroom and you like have to do these things I will.

Me: Yea, I guess you want to be very polite but it's also to feel at home for the most part. Um what was the family dynamic like with your partner's family?

Kristen: She had two parents and then she had a younger sister who was 16 I think. So her sister was out all the time but it was with her friends just hanging out. But it was what she did too usually. It seemed like they had a lot of independence.

Me: What did you think of that?

Kristen: I liked it, I was like wow, I wish this was me when I was 16. Her mom was like, “you should go to that party why are you staying home?” I was like, wow, that’s so cool!

Me: Really?

Kristen: Yea, really.

Me: Did you feel you got to experience that independence with family?

Kristen: Yea, my family gives me a lot of that too, so it wasn’t too different, but yea, there was never a question of if we could go out. It was always, “Of course. Go for it.”

Me: Why do you think? Because I’ve heard this common theme with everybody, but why do you think there is this independence among the Danish students or the Danish kids?

Kristen: I have no idea. I feel like, we focus so much on school, like you have to graduate and you have to go to college in this amount of time, and I feel like for them that time is like longer right?

Me: Yea.

Kristen: Like they’re in school longer, right?

Me: I don’t think they’ll go off the University until they’re like 19 or 20. In fact, one girl from last year’s exchange was 20.

Kristen: Oh.

Me: Yea, so she was older.

Kristen: Wow, that’s crazy.

Me: So I mean they just go through school at a different pace. So, do you think like, could have the level of independence here or should we have the level of independence here for our kids?

Kristen: I don’t think so. I think because they have like all of these social programs to help them if they fail, but for us, I could be completely wrong.

Me: No, that’s your impression.

Kristen: If we like, fail, we’re kinda screwed, like if we don’t get a job in time, if we don’t graduate college, don’t graduate high school like we’re kinda screwed. So I feel like we definitely need more discipline, just to keep us on the track.

Me: But because they have a little more of the safety net they have a little more room for error is what you’re saying?

Kristen: And also there’s like, so many people in America, I feel like if we all had that level of independence, too many people would take advantage of it.

Me: How so?

Kristen: Um, like with their school, I know they’re a smaller school, but if we could just go home whenever, no one would come to school.

Me: You don’t think?

Kristen: I don’t think, we wouldn’t.

Me: Even if it was something that you were able to get used to from a younger age do you think?

Kristen: I think yea, that would help, that would for sure help.

Me: Obviously tomorrow if Mr. Hurley got on the PA system and said “alright, you guys can leave if you want to,” it’d be, it might be like chaos but...

Kristen: Probably, but if we grew up like that then I feel like no one would take advantage of it.

Me: I mean that is always interesting and fascinating to me to see like I think how the students at our school respond to that level of freedom is kind of, it is I like it’s fun to see how

eye-opening it is like, and that it works and everybody, like all of you guys were perfectly fine with that.

Kristen: Yea, it's unheard of.

Me: Um, so do you have a difference of feeling when you were around the other American students versus being with just your partner or in a group of just the Danish students.

Kristen: Um, yea, for sure.

Me: What was that?

Kristen: So when it was just me and Freia, like we got along and we really liked each other, but like there wasn't as much to talk about.

Me: Ok

Kristen: I don't know, like it might just be me and her and just our personalities, because we're both not like, super chatty, but like, so I don't know there wasn't as much to talk about. But we did, we did. But like Jamie, the other Americans we could be like, there was like a lot more, I don't know to like, talk about.

Me: Talk about your about your experiences.

Kristen: Yea, and I remember Jamie's exchange mom would be like me and Jamie talk, like we wouldn't stop talking when we were together and that like our partners wouldn't really talk to each other that much. Like I feel like Americans are just like, chattier and like, I don't know, that's what she said. But definitely with the Americans I was a lot more talkative.

Me: It's hard, especially being 10 days of one person it's not like with your family when you're home and you talk that way. Um do you think prior experiences that you have before going to Denmark had any real big influence on your time in Denmark? Or your ability to experience Denmark?

Kristen: I definitely think so a little bit. I know in Italy we were really focused on time, like we have to get here at this time to see everything, and like, I kinda learn if you have a mentality like that, you don't like enjoy it as much.

Me: Can you explain that a little more?

Kristen: Yea, so like, I don't know like, so also my family, we're just really rushed and stressed a lot, so like, when we were like there, this is just like an example. I really wanted a souvenir, but I spent like so much time.

Me: This is in Italy?

Kristen: This is in Italy, yea. I spent so much time like trying to figure out what I wanted to get, and I was like, it has to be perfect, it has to be the perfect thing to like remember the trip. And in Denmark I was like no I'm just going to enjoy it, like it doesn't have to be perfect.

Me: Why was it different?

Kristen: I think because I was just like thinking different about it

Me: What do you mean you were thinking different about it?

Kristen: Cause I like knew like when I did that before it stressed me out and made me not enjoy what I was doing as much, so like this time I was like I'm not going to do that, like I'm just going to enjoy it.

Me: So you went in with a different mindset?

Kristen: Yea.

Me: Than you did from Italy? So you learned that from your, is that something that you thought about going that you thought about your Italy trip and said listen, “I missed out on this opportunity and I’m not going to do that here.”

Kristen: Yea.

Me: Okay.

Kristen: Absolutely.

Me: That’s really interesting so how I mean how hard was it to be able to do that to change your mindset of traveling?

Kristen: Um, I don’t know I just was like, that didn’t like make me happy last time, so I’m just going to change it, and it was easy because it was just so different. Like, I wasn’t just with my family, like it was really different to what I was used to, but it was just kind of easier to change it all, you know?

Me: I think that’s a really interesting point. So the thing you mentioned, and this has come up too with other people, is the thing about being rushed with your family versus not having that same mentality in Denmark um, can you maybe talk about that a little bit?

Kristen: Yea, yea. So I guess with my family like, I guess I thought about the money a lot more when we were like, “ok we have to make it worth it.” And here it just felt like our everyday lives, it just I don’t know, it just felt like more natural and we were with someone. And also we didn’t plan anything, and it was all planned for us.

Me: In Italy or in Denmark?

Kristen: Denmark.

Me: Ok, so that took the burden off of you?

Kristen: Yea, so we could just be like, ok, what are we doing today?

Me: Right.

Kristen: And like, I guess, on my other trip like, we had to do it ourselves, so we were like, let’s do it all.

Me: Ok.

Kristen: So I guess that was different, what made it different.

Me: I think it’s also interesting because like, when you’re in your home, you’re not going to every tourist site. You’re not going to everything you can see like it’s not how we live our lives, but you’re with a partner who, that’s not how she’s going to live her life and you know over there so you can have to get in that mindset.

Kristen: Yea, it’s nice.

Me: Now, was there any influence in this trip when you came back and you had a different viewpoint towards things like any multicultural elements such as politics and religion or pop-culture? You know, was there any different thought there? Or did you come back as that was that experience and I’m still me but I have this experience in the past?

Kristen: Oh it absolutely helped, like it changed a lot about how I see politics.

Me: Really?

Kristen: I honestly think I learned more about America and its economic system, like in Denmark, then I did my whole life.

Me: Really?

Kristen: Yea.

Me: Why do you think that was?

Kristen: Those classes that we did, the one, I don't know, the one where we talked about like how our government is structured, it like, it made so much sense to me for some reason. I guess like the way they said it, but like, I just like knew so much more, but like, I just knew what was wrong with it. What is good with it, and it definitely like, changed my mind. And like, I saw how Denmark was like, so different, but it was so good. Like it was just so much better than the United States.

Me: What did you like better?

Kristen: I really liked the uh, the social problem, like the social situations they had set up.

Me: For them, like, the way they did, not the right word, I can't think of it, but like oh what's that word.

Kristen: The environment, like the way they did their trash, you know how everything's clean.

Me: Oh, I don't know what the word is. I know what you mean though: how they set up their society.

Kristen: Yea.

Me: And what not.

Kristen: Like sustainable energy, and they biked everywhere. They didn't have big cars. Like the way they took care of the environment. I don't know there's like a word for it. Just the way they did everything, so like better, nicer, cleaner. Like, more for the people.

Me: That interesting. So did that influence a change in politics you might support here?

Kristen: Uh no, because I feel like it was the same way when I got there. But when I got back it was like, oh it works, like I can see it worked for them.

Me: Interesting. Um I like that, it works for them, you see it differently. Alright, so I guess overall moving forward, what did you take from this exchange from this experience what's what are you going to take with you if anything?

Kristen: I think I'm going to take, like how, like their society is set up, and just like I don't know, I don't know, it's such a hard question, I definitely just think I'm going to take, I don't know there's so many things, just like the way they live their lives, and I think like hygge, for sure hygge. Like they stop, they slow down, like they take the time to enjoy themselves, and I feel like that's something I definitely need, and should do more, and feel like everyone can use a little more of. I was like, so when I got home I was like, oh, I'm going to make tea like we did in Denmark, and I was like, no, that takes so much time, like I don't have time for that. then I was like, oh wait, that's the whole point, like, you take the time for that, like you take the time to enjoy.

Me: I like that.

Kristen: Yea.

Me: Have you done that, have you made tea?

Kristen: Oh no, I don't have time.

Me: Make the time Kristen!

Kristen: I don't know, I just, I've been busy!

Me: So how can you incorporate that? How can you make the time?

Kristen: Well I think now that I'm graduating, I'll have so much more time. then I can make the time.

Me: You have to reinvent yourself now!

Kristen: Yea, true, you're going to a new life starting over

Me: Yea, you're starting fresh. Um, has this had any impact, um you're going away next year. Has this had any impact on going to college?

Kristen: Yea, cause when I left I was like, so sad, and I was like who's going to hug me every day? Like my mom's not there, like what am I going to do, but then I realized, like no, I'm going to be ok. I'll be perfectly fine. Like, I missed my family, but like, I was never homesick, I was just like, ok, this is where I am, this is what I'm doing, my family is not here, and that's fine. So I feel like I'll be fine in college. It showed me that I can handle being away from my family

Me: What specifically helped you to realize you can be away from your family?

Kristen: Um, not being with them, but like also, doing the airport by myself, well obviously not by myself.

Me: Well, we give you some latitude there.

Kristen: Yea, and just like being on my own. Like figuring out stuff on my own. Like doing the plane ticket. And like we had to sign in for the plane ticket, before we left. And like my dad had done that for me before we left, and I was like, ok, how do we do this? And I was like, trying to figure basic things out that like my dad or my mom would do for me and it showed me like, wow, I can do things, like I can be responsible, I'm on top of this. And like not losing anything either.

Me: So was there, was there any worry at any point when you had to do some of those things like the plane ticket or figure things out for yourself, were there any nerves there?

Kristen: Oh yea, like I think I tried to call my dad, but they were on vacation somewhere else, and probably asleep, so I like definitely tried to get to them, and I definitely panicked a little bit, but I don't know, it's fine, like it's fine, it will work itself out. And it did.

Me: Um, so how do you take that to your next experience where you have to travel, you have to go somewhere on your own, or you know again you're going to college how does that translate?

Kristen: I think it just shows me, like, maybe the first thing is not call my parents, like maybe take the time to like, see if I can do it myself first, and like take the responsibility for my own things and like, I don't know, just like know that I can do it, and know that it might take some time, but like, you'll get there like you'll be fine.

Me: And you didn't really have that beforehand?

Kristen: I did, but like I wasn't really sure that I could do it, I was like, we'll see. I was like, I probably can, but like I've never really seen that I can before. Like I've never had to, like my mom, is very, like, you know.

Me: So you were put in a situation where you had to do it.

Kristen: Yea.

Me: Whereas before you could have done it but didn't need to.

Kristen: Yea, because my mom, she's one of those moms that's like always on top of it so I've never had to like, figure it out before.

Me: That's nice, so like you've got new confidence going forward?

Kristen: Yea, yea.

Me: I mean will that help with I mean just the specific things that you have to do at college. I mean at college you're not going to have your parents there everyday.

Kristen: Oh my God yea, for sure. Like it really helped. And knowing like I can meet new people, talk to people, like just like being somewhere I haven't been before and live there. Meet people and make new friends, yea, it definitely showed me that I have that ability. So, it definitely made me a lot calmer about college.

Me: That's good

Kristen: I'm not as freaked, so that's good

Me: Um well that's awesome, uh, last question. With all things said and done, would you do the exchange again as it happened already

Kristen: Oh yea, oh for sure

Me: Alright.

Kristen: Yea.

Me: So then what's the what's the elevator pitch that you give to someone, the quick rundown you give to someone who's on the fence about doing this exchange? What's the rundown you give them to say, you should do this?

Kristen: Um, definitely just do it, like it will change your life. It was definitely one of the best experiences I've ever had, like I think it was the best experience I've ever had. Like getting to travel with your friends, like, just seeing a whole new country, like that in itself is just so amazing, and like the people you'll meet. That was just the best. It was so cool.

Me: That's awesome Kristen. Well Kristen, thank you very much and I apologize that you know, we had to reschedule a couple times and I really appreciate this um and good luck going forward.

Kristen: Thank you.

Appendix Q: Journal Prompts

After having spent the first weekend in Denmark, describe your thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and reactions to what you have experienced.

[illegible]

Describe your positive experiences. (Describe what has been easy, fun, enlightening, etc.)

[illegible]

Describe your negative experiences. (Describe what has been difficult, confusing, unpleasant, etc.)

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. On the left side, there is a vertical margin line, creating a narrow left margin. The paper appears to be from a notebook or a standard ruled document.

Now that you are leaving Denmark, describe the significance of this experience for you including the highlights and the lowlights.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Appendix R: Journal Entries

Amanda

1. The first weekend in Denmark has been fun, exciting, nerve-wracking, and new. It can be difficult because the Danes are so extremely close & always want to be together. I am not as close w/ the Americans, so sometimes I feel uncomfortable/out of place. I thought Copenhagen was beautiful, but I feel like am biased to like NYC better :). I love the times where it can be just me and my Dane, so we can connect and become closer. It's very odd how people walk/ride bikes everywhere (not just in the big cities!) It's also kind of odd how most of the Danes have their parents drive them everywhere (I like being able to get up and drive to wherever whenever). I loved how all the dining is outside in the cities like Malmö and Copenhagen. I find it so quaint & cute. I love how everyone here dresses so nice & actually puts effort into their appearance. I think it's something America should take up.
2. This trip has been so fun, exciting and new. My favorite parts are when it's just me and my Dane. We get along so well & it feels like I'm with just one of my best friends. I loved getting to see Copenhagen & how it differs from American cities. Finding the similarities & differences between the U.S. and Denmark is so fun (especially w/ how the teens act/react). It was so fun to go to Sweden to have the opportunity to say I went to 2 countries during this trip.
3. While the trip has been so fun, there have been challenges. I've been pretty exhausted/tired so far b/c we've been doing so much. It has been a bit irritating because I feel like the Danes have been unprepared/not knowing what they're doing over the weekend in Copenhagen + Sweden. Another thing is that the Danes will tend to only stay w/ each other and kind of "ditch" the Americans.
4. The whole experience has been so educating, fun, and awesome. My exchange partner and I have become so close. I know that we will keep in touch forever. The trip has shown me that there is so much out there in the world, and I want to see it all. I now get to cross off Denmark & Sweden off my countries list!!! There are aspects of Danish culture that I adore, but also parts that aren't my favorite. I told my partner that the Danish people are kind of like an egg. There's an outer shell you must get through in order to get to the good stuff. It became frustrating at points though because it seemed like nobody really knew what they were doing and things were all over the place. Planning becomes difficult in large groups. Leaving Denmark brings me sadness because I've made such great memories. I wouldn't trade the experience for the world, and am counting down the days until I can see my Dane again.

Bari

1. The words "thank you," "sorry," or "excuse me," as much as the Americans do
They are more open about their politicians point of views and opinions on things
Their schedules are not as strict and they enjoy spending their time relaxing more. They also don't feel as rushed.
The structures of buildings are beautiful and the large windows add a simple, natural lighting.
I enjoy being a part of the Danish life
Although Danes seem quiet and closed off at first, they often are the nicest people.
2. The weather has remained extremely nice and sunny.
Having down time with his family to simply have tea has been amazing.

The public transportation has been fun to take
The city is kept cleaner and brighter than Philly

3. Not having a structured schedule has thrown me off.

Sightseeing has been more limited than I expected.

I often feel like I am constantly being listened to and have very little privacy, but the Danes are able to freely talk without having any understanding about what they're saying.

4. This experience has really opened my eyes to the cultural differences I have with others-both good and not so good. While being in Denmark, I was able to experience the lifestyle of a Danish teenager first hand. Sometimes the days were a little frustrating and hard to keep up with, but that was only me learning how to be a Dane. We would ride our bikes early in the morning to get to school rather than take the easy way of driving a car. This was often cold and then even worse in the afternoon when it felt a bit warmer and the rest of the trip was all up hill. If we were going anywhere further than the school we would take the train. I noticed how difficult this could be to do if we run into a strike that day or the schedule is delayed for other reasons. The use of this open and public transportation made me realize how much freedom Danes have at younger ages. I noticed many elementary school kids riding their bikes to school by themselves. At home, our moms or dads would hold our hands at the bottom of the driveway until the bus came and took us away. This freedom felt even more odd when the sun went down and we remained as teenagers who were alone in the stress of Copenhagen. I think remaining on the streets of Philly after dark would surely strike some fear in myself and my mother. Unfortunately, leaving us to rely on ourselves had its downsides as well. There was often no plan or structure for the day among the students, so getting anything done or seeing anything specific got a bit complicated. Also, the Danish students were not very good at making sure they stuck with their partner in the busy streets of Copenhagen. There were a few American students who would end up with others simply because they felt lost after having their Dane walk away from them with no warning. I had this experience on my last day when my Dane walked away from me when I was looking another direction without a heads up. I took a few hours of staying with others until he finally found me again after he had gone out for dinner and had no plan to get me food somehow. This experience left me a bit anxious and uncomfortable, but taught me to use the independence skills they have to feel safe in an area as crowded as Tivoli. I also had an amazing opportunity to try Danish dishes that I do not have access to at home. Their steak in Denmark is far better than back in the United States. Although, I did find their food to be a bit saltier and after talking to Jakob, I found out that the salt was normal and used to be heavier in past time. I loved experiencing and living in the Danish culture for ten days, but nothing will beat the amazing friends I created on this trip. From the American AND the Danish side, I made amazing relationships I was not expecting to have. I now have more people by my side at home that I don't think I have ever expected to be close to. Even better, I made friends from an ocean away. Yes, it is upsetting to leave them with little chance of crossing paths again, but now I know I have something to look forward to or try to do if I ever find myself in Europe's direction again. I also know now that I have someone overseas to look out for me if the time is ever necessary. I couldn't have asked for anything better than the eye-opening experiences and best friends that this exchange gave me, and I cannot wait for the future years to experience this too.

Blanca

1. My first thought/feeling is how great my host family is. They have all been so nice and understanding and very welcoming. Their house is about 20 min. from the school and is surrounded by hills, lakes, and farms with lots of horses. We went for a walk around the area and it was beautiful. I also love how so many people walk, run, or bike everywhere. The city is also amazing. It is definitely cleaner and less crowded than cities like New York. I wish my partner was a little more inclusive with myself and other Danes in general. I have noticed that he/she will just walk away from the group without even telling me. I also spend more time talking to the parents than I do my partner. I have not had a home cooked meal (except breakfast when they make homeade bread fresh every morning), but this is probably because I've gone out everyday. (to Copenhagen and Sweden). One thing that I noticed immediately was the white-white walls, ceilings, floors, cabinets. There are also lots of windows that brighten up the rooms. The roads are also very different. There are more speed bumps and no stop signs which was a surprise to me.
2. The most positive experience was by far my partner's parents. They are so great. I can spend (and did) hours talking to them (while partner sits in his/her room). I also loved taken the trains to Copenhagen and Sweden, and I like both those places as well. Sleeping has also been really easy because the couch is really comfy.
3. The most negative experience is how introverted my partner is. She/he only talks to one other person (Danes and americans both), and does not really want to spend time as a group Which is hard for me because I like to talk to people and spend time with other people during my time here. My partner also leaves the group without telling me, leaving Oliver to pay for my lunch in Sweden b/c I only had Danish Kroner.
4. This experience has taught me a lot of things. To start, I love Denmark and I am so grateful that I had the opportunity to go on this exchange. I checked off a lot of firsts that I will always remember, such as my first time in Europe. Although the majority of the trip was great, my experience was probably a little different than most of the other students. This was my first time in Denmark and sadly probably my last time. Because of this, I wanted to see/do as many things within the time I was there. I am also the type of person who loves company and talking to other people. However, I was paired with a girl who rarely talks, loves isolating herself and does not go out very often. Her family was also not very understanding and I spent ours in my room while everyone else was out experiencing the beautiful country. Don't get me wrong, we did go out and I did experience a lot of fun/cool things, but even when we did my partner would ditch me. I had to learn to communicate with people very disimilar to me and to live with very reserved people. It was difficult at times but I will always remember these lessons. and lastly, although my Dane and I did not build a friendship I still met so many amazing people (Danes and Americans) that I will hopefully stay friends with forever.

Brendan

1. Thus far, the exchange has served as a much needed break from the everyday demands, obligations, tasks, and expectations of my regular American, academic, and domestic lifestyle. This exchange not only presents opportunity to relax and refresh, but also gives time for introspective reflection that is consistenly absent from my regular rutine. While conversing with Gustav & his brother, I have realized the differences between Danish and American culture primarily like in mindset. The political and educational system in Denmark seems to correspond with their famous "happiest people alive" rating. Of course it seems

impossible to measure such a complex human emotion, but undoubtedly the “socialist” ideology and school curriculum put a greater emphasis in mental or “spiritual” wellbeing than in American. It appears that it is the American definition of success that driving the self destructive demand for “working to death” and over-education. For example, Gustav’s brother is very bright with unparalleled communication skills paired with critical ideas on all realms of the physical and spiritual world, yet, in school, he cobbles shoes and does ancient dances. I can’t help but to think that his potential may be wasted- yet it is a highly american way of thinking. When I suggested he pursue politics, he immediately dismissed the idea b/c he would be “overstressed.” To speak of my own enlightenment on this subject, the Danes-including Gustav- say that we (Americans) have so much energy. It is not b/c the Danes are lazy, its simply b/c we are used to the rigor and fast-pace nature of the American way. While there tendency can be beneficial for optimizing productivity and potential, it is also equally beneficial to relax, rejuvenate, and embrace Danish hygge.

2. Saturday, March 30, the exchange or majority of exchange went to Copenhagen. Having slept exactly 12 hours, I knew it was going to be a great day. The sun was shining, with a slight breeze, it was perfection. Sara, Jordyn, Gustav and I went in to the city at 1. After a day of walking through the clean cobblestone streets, the group found itself in a town square, with beautiful high rise up buildings on all sides, churches with ornate architecture designs, and cafes with people laying back enjoying the beautiful day and on a cup of coffee. In its center stood a lone musician, playing the guitar and playing the song “Halleluia.” The (*ilegible*) were simple, crystal clear, and absolutely perfection with sunrays fluttering down into the square, glimmering off of the guitar and the nearby wishing fountain. a steady crowd had gathered. Maybe 50 or 60 people listening closely, together, enjoying the moment. Soaking up the beauty of this world using every sense possible. This. Is. Everything.
3. **No Response**
4. Leaving Denmark, the prevailing emotion at hand is sadness. The realization that friendships made, person met and places visited that gave me so much joy, may never be recaptured for some time to come. Talks with Gustav and his immediat family have shown them to be some of the sweetest, most innocent, intelligent, and all around interesting people I have ever met. This exchange has offered me an invaluable opportunity to experience time on my own, a world across an ocean, and learn from a very different culture. I bring back one word to summarize the exchange and Danish culture as a whole: hygge. I’ve said it many times, often jokingly, but there are inextricable connections between this word- this mindset- as happiness. America in my mind, has become notorious for losing faith and benefit in the simple pleasures of everyday life because the modern mindset of “working to death” or education overdrive until success too often causes unhealthy stress. The Danish people live a quite stress free life. I often find myself with extra-energy constrained within me from the constant fast-pace lifestyle or scheduling to the brim common in the states. I always feel the need to be on the go- and brought this American lifestyle to Denmark by taking runs or organizing group hangouts when we were doing nothing. I found myself mentally battling with myself over the Danish educational system and lifestyle because of “wasted potential. I will have no answer to those concerns- I said once during a group discussion that this exchange was to me- in part- a vacation. I enjoyed the time to relax and retreat. I (*ilegible*). Things that were important in my life. The desire for financial success and prestige contrary w/my understanding of what makes you happy. During my downtime at Marie Kruses I drew four pictures. This came as a great surprise to me who had not done even a taste of artistic

expression (*illegible*). However it was a great source of personal development and satisfaction that had been missing from my life in the U.S. because I prioritized school and social activities over much simpler pastimes. I had time to reflect on the differences between American and Danish (*illegible*). many of whom were (*illegible*)... (*illegible*). emphasis on community, and driving age are all enforced (*illegible*). that cannot be practical in the US despite how appealing it is. I love the ecofriendly nature of Denmark and (*illegible*). in politics and every day interaction. But I have been even more confused on socialism. Not the economic policies or legitimacy of it- but its connotation from an American standpoint. Socialism has been made out to be a (*illegible*). force on evil. Yet, however the (*illegible*).

Bridget

1. After my 1st weekend in Denmark, I'm a bit tired but not too bad. I slept really well in the room they gave me. The food is quite different but everything has been good. My partner's family has been very kind and understanding whenever I was tired. We were very calm for the weekend. Saturday we went to a few touristy places and they gave me some historical facts. Sunday we did homework and went to a greenhouse for coffee and tea. Everything is so pretty and quite.
2. My positive experiences have been pretty much everything so far, the foods good, her family's really nice and welcoming, the views are gorgeous.
3. The few negative experiences were just the plane ride and being a bit out of it because of the time change I've been a bit spacey and forgetting about being in a different country.
4. The exchange has been the best school related experience of my life and I wish it had been longer. My partner and I connected really well and it was like having a sister. I also got to get along really well with her family (parents, sister, dog). I loved being a part of their family and I hope to see them all again one day. Their routine was so calming and a nice break from my normal routine. Honestly I loved walking everywhere and the public transport was really nice. I never felt homesick since it felt like I was already home. I loved learning about their culture and traditions and there are even a few traditions I want to include in life in the US. I never even once disliked if they spoke Danish in front of me because I never needed to worry about the conversation they were having, I trusted my partner completely since we had become such good friends on this trip. I'll definitely be keeping in touch with her and her family. Overall I had a very positive experience and I can't think of any negatives besides leaving and feeling that I could have stayed more if I could. (Also the chosen lessons were a bit repetitive)

Caitlin

1. When we first landed all I could think about was how flat all of Denmark looked. There was no big sky lines as we would see in NYC. When we got off the plane I was super excited about the trip. Excited to see what it is like to live in a different country. Here, life slows down. There is no hustle to get from point A to point B. They do not rush you in the morning to get ready. I was definitely shocked by this because I always feel rushed back home. When in Copenhagen and Sweden I was amazed about the structure of the buildings as they were old charming and colorful. At home we have modern buildings that look awful compared to these. When we arrived at the school I felt very welcomed with the greetings we had from the Danes. However, I was a little disappointed that we always left to the cities early. Dinner was always at 6:30 so if we left by 6:01 we were screwed, I wish we could have stayed longer in

Malmö and Copenhagen. Overall, I love it here and I definitely want to come back in the future. #copenhagenforev

2. seeing the different buildings in the two countries was very interesting. I feel as though each building has an interesting background to it dating back a couple of years. Transportation from city to city was very easy. Each train runs every 20 mins. If you do not feel like riding the train. we can easily find the bus. meeting “new” people that I did not talk to before we were always in a bigger group. my host family was amazing. We bonded and were so sweet. Nanna’s mom started to cry at departure which I thought was so sweet.
3. Being jetlagged was definitely a negative experience for me. I remember Friday night we were over at mette’s house watching a movie, and I kept closing my eyes and falling asleep w/o even realizing it. Sometimes my partner and I humped heads on what we wanted to do. However in the end we came up w/ a solution
4. This exchange experience has been amazing! I learned a lot about the Denmark culture. This vacation was definitely the most eye opening. Instead of just going to the country and seeing it for yourself is much more different than this exchange. I saw host family and partner lived, and how they get through day by day. One of the lowlights of the trip was when my partner came over I felt as though I had not a lot of free time, but we made it work. Another lowlight is when my partner and I had an argument. It was pretty intense and was a he said she said convo. In the end we hugged it out and it went over really well. I loved the different trips we took to Sweden, Copenhagen and Elsinore. The buildings were so pretty. I loved meeting new people, and everyone was so nice and welcoming. I will always remember this trip and my partner.

Cathleen

4. This trip made me realize a lot of things: both about myself and about the rest of the world about myself. I learned that it is possible for me to feel at home on the way across the ocean. It almost worried me how unattached I felt from my own home and family. I didn’t really feel homesick at all. However I did want to go home because after a few days living with my exchange partner was difficult to handle. I learned that although Denmark and America are so far apart geographically, they are very similar. The food is very similar and the culture is as well. It showed me that people from all over, even if they’re far away, are all humans at the end of the day. We speak different languages and view each other as foreigners, but I think we are all more similar than we think we are.

Christina

1. After my first weekend in denmark, I think I will definitely come back next summer. They do things differently here but I’m am getting used to it. The plane ride was fine surprisingly. I was a little nervous. The reaction of how friendly but a little over friendly.
2. Copenhagen and shopping was my favorite part along with the zoo.
3. Oliver can talk so much and when we were watching a movie no one stopped talking.
4. The only lowlight of the trip is not be able to go to sweden and not being able to see the whole catacombs. I felt like on this trip that I got way closer with my dane then I did at home. Denmark felt more like home then I thought it would be, though the cultural differences were confusing at first. I will keep the amazing knowledge that I learned from the trip until well I cant till remember.

Denise

1. Fun, -Went to city, -Everyone rides public transportation, -Food is not good, homecooked meals are better
2. talking with the family (siblings), -Visiting Copenhagen/Sweden, -Culture is welcoming, -Happiness
3. Never use hands to eat (pizza), -Talk in Danish around you
4. This trip was a truly amazing experience. During the duration of the trip there were many high and low points. Loved having the opportunity to meet new people from across the ocean, and ending up becoming a huge part of their life. Not only becoming close with the Danish students but from west and east. To now say I'm friends and even close with some of the other students from America is such a cool thing-- without this trip I don't know if I would ever even exchange words with some of the people. Some lows I experienced was when all the friends were in a group doing their own thing I was with my partners friends (I loved all of them very much and their Americans). It was just hard cause they talk about how fun things were and I'm kinda left out because I didn't experience these things with them. I loved my Dane and I think partner choices were good. I think throughout the whole trip each day had a new highlight there were so many great stories and memories that will be forever remembered and cherished. Going to school for three days was fine but it would have been nice for like one of classes we could have worked on our own homework, because you didn't want to do it at night or on the weekend. We were always seeing or doing something.

Denny

1. After my first weekend in Denmark I was given a new perspective on both the exchange and the World around me. My first time in Denmark, I was taken sort of by surprise because I wasn't exactly sure what to expect. But coming back knowing what happens for the most part allowed me to better a grasp on my surroundings. I have gained a new appreciation for what I have previously experienced. I am more about the experience and a more comfortable about traveling and other cultures.
2. Meeting the family and having them be very welcome. Meeting new people and getting to know them. I also enjoy the aspect of living, not just seeing another culture.
3. Having chaos when it comes to planning really held us back, The exhaustion also always makes me slower.
4. My experience in Denmark will always hold a significant place moving forward in life. Having the chance to travel to another country and live with another family may just be the epitome of travel experience for a student. Through this experience i learned so much about the country of Denmark, but also I learned the positives and negatives of traveling on an exchange program. Getting to make new friends, see new sights, try new foods, and learn in a foreign school all have provided me with an excitement to continue to travel and learn about the world around me. Yet with everything, issues are bound to crop up. the main issues I saw were a lack of planning and accountability among the Danes. A few of the Danes would just walk away and leave us behind in a foreign city. A few instances of miscommunication and poor planning had also held back some of the experiences. All in all though, regardless of the issues, I will hold the experience as one of my best experiences of my life so far.

Jamie

1. The first weekend was amazing! We went to Copenhagen and I thought it was beautiful. It seemed much cleaner than NYC and Philly. There is much less homeless people here too. I thought it was funny how my partner thought Copenhagen was very crowded, but to me it was normal. I ate some traditional Danish food like dark bread and it was very good. The food here seems much fresher than ours. I did not think we would eat that often, but we have eaten so much! At every meal there is bread, they snack between meals, drink lots of coke, and eat candy at night. Every Day the Danes dress so nice, even at school. The water here is also so much better than ours.
2. my partner is very easy to talk to and make plans. -the food I have eaten has been really good, -I met Maria's older brother and grandparents who were so sweet, but it was so nice learning more about Denmark from them, -Her parents were so kind and drive us everywhere
3. I tried fish for the first time in a while, I still do not like it, -We eat a lot of food, so I am full most of the time, -sometimes at dinner there are long silent pauses before anyone talks
4. My trip to Denmark has been the best experience ever! The most significant thing I gained from my experience is a new best friend. My host family was so welcoming and kind to me. I now always know I have a home in Denmark. My favorite Danish cultural trait I learned is hygge. My host family showed me how easy it is to relax and have family time. The hardest part about the trip was the language barrier. Even though the Danes knew English, when they were in a group, they all spoke in Danish. Even though this was challenging at times, no matter what my Dane and I were able to have fun. Overall, this experience showed me the power of friendship even when there are cultural differences.

Jen

1. The food has been interesting so far. Of the ones I have tried, I love their chocolate the best. I find it interesting that despite how different Denmark is from the United States, I can still find similarities to my own culture or other cultures I have experienced in my travels. It is interesting how we can still understand each other even though we grew up experiencing very different lives and lifestyles.
2. It has been generally easy to talk to my partner and her family. I can generally understand what they are saying as they have made an effort to talk in English around me and they will try to explain Danish traditions in English. Even if they are unsure of a word in English, it is usually close enough for me to figure out. I am so impressed with their ability to understand English. I have also enjoyed visiting Copenhagen with my partner as I noted the similarities and differences between the city and others I have been to (American or otherwise). I like learning about what the Danes value and are proud of. It is fun and incredible.
3. It is confusing and occasionally awkward when the Danes start talking to each other in Danish. Sometimes I feel left out from the conversation and it makes me feel lost. When I went to Sweden with my exchange partner, communication became more difficult. The group split into the Americans and the Danes as that is the group most are comfortable with. Also, buying lunch and going shopping was uncomfortable because the Danes can't speak Swedish (nor can the Americans) and it felt awkward talking in English to the Swedes.
4. The experience of learning another culture through an exchange is significant because it teaches the people involved in the exchange to better appreciate differences and the things they already have. It's not always easy to participate in an exchange because there are times where language barriers and misunderstandings due to different customs made it difficult to have a positive experience with an exchange. I feel lucky that my exchange partner and I

were able to understand one another and have open discussions about the way each of our cultures approaches various situations. At the end of the exchange, I have newfound friends and an appreciation for what makes every culture unique, not weird.

Julie

1. After my first weekend in Denmark, even though I am extremely exhausted, the amount of fun I've had and all that I've learned, is amazing to me, experiencing culture in different ways is very important. Usually we are tourists and are sightseeing however being a "done" and living like one is a total different perspectives. Its very interesting to me to to learn about all the different things between America and Denmark. Some differennnces I'm very surprised and shocked however, other things I expect and don't notice as much. Overall after the first weekend I'm excited to spend more time experiencing the foreign city and trying more new foods.
2. Several positive experiences that I had was going to the colorful houses in Denmark, exploring through the streets of Copenhagen while trying to find restaurants and getting lost, however making memories of it. I love living like a Dane, and eating like a Dane however not exactly not knowing what I was eating. Almost everything that I have done in Denmark so far has been so much fun, and I've enjoyed very much.
3. Some negative experiences that I have been through is traveling in such a big group throughout a foreign cities and nobody having a plan or idea of where to go. Then this would cause an argument amongst and would sometimes be stressful for the Americans because the Danes would be talking in Danish and we wouldn't know what they were saying and at all times could be frustrating for us Americans.
4. While leaving Denmark, I feel so sad and upset that I have to leave all my new Danish friends and the wonderful place that Denmark is, however, I am very happy that I got a chance to go on the exchange. To me, the main lowlight was simply never connecting with my Danish partner. Me and him could talk but there just seemed to be constant tension and awkwardness. There were moments when we got along, but for example, I asked him if I could meet his family (sense I was living with another Dane) and he goes "I mean I suppose" but never ended up even tho I asked him. I just thought since I housed him and he met my family I should at least meet his. Basically, the whole trouble with my Dane, however but also my Dane constantly leaving me, or nearly losing me in the central station. It would frustrate me, but at the same time I knew to remain calm. Overall, the trip was filled with so many highlights. Almost every single day was filled with activities and get togethers, which are always the best. Going to Sweden and into Copenhagen with all the Danes and Americans was so much fun. I think the hardest part of the whole exchange that I get extremely close with several of the Danes. Including having one be one of my best friends, and going 150 days without seeing each other then finally seeing each other and spending everyday together and having so much fun and discovering various places. But leaving him was very hard for me, even though he is going to come to America and me to Denmark, its just sad leaving all the new friends you make, but also being so grateful that you get to experience such a rare opportunity. When your involved in a program like this, its very important to embrace it, leave the drama at home, discover the world, and just soak it in. Denmark is truly an amazing place, and its beautiful, even though it is very different than America, it is also so interesting experiencing all the many various cultural differences. Overall, I fell in love with the trip and with it never would end, however I know it has to.

Katie

1. While reflecting this weekend I have nothing but a positive attitude. I sure am tired but I don't mind because I have experienced so much. I have been to Copenhagen 2 times, took a trip to Sweden, and have taken a jog/walk around a beautiful lake. I was quite surprised by several things that occurred. Things such as how the toilets have two different flushes, the houses are super expensive but small, and that I have eaten all sorts of foods but have yet to eat Danish food. The way people act is also surprising. I have heard that Denmark is one of the happiest places on earth, but whenever I catch a glimpse of someone outside of the program they look kind of sad. The people also shocked me with their manners, or lack thereof. No one says sorry, or excuse me they just push and shove to make their way to their desired destination. Despite the differences mentioned above I have felt welcome and at home, I am thankful for all my experiences thus far.
2. Honestly most of my experiences have been positive. Ranging from a long walk around a lake to hanging out at Martin and Oliver's houses, to trips to the most beautiful city (Copenhagen), to trips to Sweden, and long jog around the lake while the sun set.
3. The only negatives are -poor planning, - I wish we saw more of Sweden rather than shopping in a mall, -lack of sleep.
4. This experience is something I could never have imagined. I have made connections with people I would have otherwise never have met, because of the large body of water that separates us. Some highlights were Copenhagen of course, and Tivoli, and for me meeting new friends some that I have ironically known for years. With all the highs there were certainly a low point or two. I was very lucky with my match up, and the people I was surrounded with. But I must admit there was a couple point where I felt frustrated and somewhat trapped. For example, and maybe it just the American in me I was most frustrated when plans were altered and not set in stone. There were multiple times where we were just wander in a mall, or a city and no one could decide what to do. I also was frustrated and displeased when I was caught in a situation with strictly Danes and they were talking Danish. They would sometimes be very exclusive and rude say no you guys can't come we only want this group...etc. I guess I am just not used to that action but it happened more often than others. The last low on the trip was all the drama. I was shocked by the amount of drama that occurred. It was nothing serious, just the petty teenage drama, but enough to create a significant damper on my trip at least. I personally find drama repulsive and unnecessary. I am never apart of it at home, but on this trip not to say I was in the drama but it always seem to find me. Girls and some boys (American/Danish) would come to me and talk to me about it and then involve me which was just an annoyance, not so much life altering. Drama is one reason I'm excited to go home and resubmerge myself with my people. The 10 days were amazing to say the least and I would not want to change anything about my trip. I loved my host family and my partner and her friends, but I am certainly ready to see my family, boyfriend, best friend and get back to my structured schedule. Thank you so much for involving me in this trip. Denmark 2019 will forever be in my memory.

Kelly

1. There's a lot more English around than I expected. The trains are also really automated. It's pretty cool. There's a lot of similarities between there & the US, though. People still play Mario Kart at parties, not really surprising, and have cake (the birthday song's different though). School starts later so I get to sleep in.

2. Going to the museum was fun, seeing exhibits on vikings. The train was also cool, very automated. Showed hosts Danish Doulingo- they found its tendency to talk about beans funny.
3. Trains down
4. Exchanging in Denmark was a unique experience unlike normal travel. Going to my partner's house and seeing their daily life & taking part in it was unique and informative. Getting to see more than just tourist spots made me feel like I understand more about the country. This is not to say that tourist things aren't also great; the castle Round tower were fun. Sure some schedule changes were a bit annoying but in the end the experience was great.

Kerry

1. -exhausted, -they do not live to a schedule, -every area is so clean, -people are put together, -more freedom, -you take more public transportation, -walk everywhere, -relaxed + calm, - food is extremely healthy (not processed)
 2. -the food here, -the gorgeous architecture, -copenhagen all day (city life), -two countries w/I 24 hrs, -conversation w/host parents
 3. -people are not as friendly, -Danes are too "free-for-all," -Never have a set plan
 4. Highlights: over this trip I gained respect and patience for other cultures. While we may be a like in so many ways, we definitely differ in mannerisms, stress levels, appearance, ect. I absolutely loved the denmark part of the exchange more. We were all so close and thoroughly loved just sitting @ someones house and just talking and enjoying each others company. Having this opportunity to learn about others and being able to experience a true danish/American culture is something not everyone will ever be able to experience in their life. -copenhagen, tivoli, conversations, Malmö, Helsingør.
- Lowlights: Sometime us Americans were left out bc of the language barrier. They also lacked in planning skills compared to us. They tended to do what they wanted to do, not what we wanted to do. And danes definitely dont undersand personal space.

Kristen

1. We have had so much this weekend, I think a lot of things are different as well as the same. Some of food things were different. They ate so much, fish and bread. They also ate a lot, I was really surprised because America is known for eating a lot of food but some meals they ate more than me! The first day here we went to Copenhagen, it was so so clean and pretty. The day we went our day we went there was some people there, to us it was only a couple people but to the danes they were saying how it is never that busy. They also dressed nicer for school. Also they used so much less trash. The waste they produced was far less than we do in America. I feel like they do little things that reduce the amount of waste.
2. -love the food so much! They eat so much fish and bread! -Her family is so nice and know a lot about America. -They are so nice and easy going, -They are putting effort into making sure we have a good time, -Their houses are really pretty and clean, -Her town looks like a fairytale, -She lives in an old farm that was converted into a fame its beautiful, -Hygge is the best ever, -The water is so good
3. -It was hard because they don't drive, so we always have to wait for her parents or the train, - They are not super talkative at dinner or breakfast
4. This trip and experience I feel like has given + taught me so much. I have learned how to experience another culture and how to manage those differences. Living w/ someone from

another culture is so different than just visiting there. Everyday I was confronted with so many interesting foods, people, traditions and opportunities that were so different from my everyday regular life.

- Highlights: -food, -new friends, -seeing how I can live outside my comfort zone, -I feel like I now have a second home + family across the world
- Lowlights: -very exhausted living with a new family for 10 days, -uncomfortable at times

Lisa

1. It is interesting how the Danes do not say please, thank you, or excuse me. It comes off as rude, unfriendly, and bad manners, but it is just not apart of their culture. Everyone in the exchange is super nice and friendly, but other Danes do not come across that way. When sitting next to a stranger on public transportation, they did not even acknowledge me. The only other person I talked to out of the exchange was another American who ask me what state I am from.
2. -how welcoming the family is, -Copenhagen is so cute, -I love how much water there is, lakes and canals, -fun exploring
3. -friendliness of unknown Danes, - how they eat with both forks and knives, -tap water
4. This exchange has been one of the best experiences. It was very enlightening. I feel in ways Americans are in their own little bubble. It was not just traveling to Denmark, but experiencing Danish culture. If I had not learned about hygge, relied on public transportation, and talked about Danish values. We stayed busy and experienced many things. Some highlights include Kronborg Castle and Copenhagen. But my favorite moments consisted of talking and laughing with the Danes and other Americans. It is the little moments that made this exchange so special. I have leared more about myself when in a different culture. I knew how loud I am, but I did not realize how outgoing I am. I believe this is a good thing, as long as I am not obnoxious. This exchange has made me go with the flow. If I had to pick a lowlight it would be the different friends of me and my partner. I was not friends with her Danes' partners and she was not friends with my friends' Danes. We did a good job balancing both "groups" and finding people in between. I was so thankful how thoughtful and understanding my partner was. Also, I feel like we brought drama. This experience was an awesome travel experience, learning different cultures, spending time and becoming more connected to hopefully lifelong friends. So thankful to be apart of this :)

Liz

1. These past few days of my trip to Denmark have been great. I have managed to adjust to the time difference by the first night. My partner and her family are amazing. On Friday when we came to the house, I took a 3 hour nap!! Then we had dinner. We had these big meatballs that were flattened a little, cucumber, red pepers, toast and a kind of liver spread which I did not care for. I found myself watching my partner and her family eat/prep their meals to see how they did it. On Saturday we took a day trip to Sweden by train which was very new and exciting since I not only hardly use public transportation, but have never done it without my mom. Now I am doing it with no parents, while in a foreign country, and its to go to another country! Sweden was very cool, pretty and was just overall great. We visited my very first castle! which I love castles, so that was very cool, but it was also the first building I stood in that was older than my country!!! which was too cool to describe. That has been one of my dreams so I was very glad we went. We had lunch in an Italian restaurant and had water from

Germany which I found funny. The danes we were with wanted to shop and though my friend and I were polite and went along, we weren't interested in clothing shopping. On Sunday we went to Copenhagen and visited the zoo oddly enough. There were a lot of baby animals! And the exhibits had mostly no netting and only parts of glass so the animals were very close (very cool). There was an underwater tunnel so polar bears swam/played above us, and we could walk through the kangaroo exhibit! Way different from American zoos so it was an awesome experience. Though we learned that when they have too many of one animal species and no other zoo wants one, the zoo will kill one of them and feed them to the lions or some other carnivore!! We discovered this when we saw a partially eaten horse head in one of the exhibits. Needless to say it was an experience we probably would never have in the US. Overall, despite maybe a rough patch, my first weekend here in Denmark has been amazing.

2. There have been numerous experiences that have been positive so far in my time in Denmark. There are a lot of bikes which I find great and funny. There are just racks of them in the cities waiting in the bike racks. It's crazy. The streets in the city are kind of cobblestone streets and they were very nice. Also down the streets with all the shops and cool buildings, it was a wide road, but there were no cars, it was for walking. So that was super cool! Also their train stations were very clean and pretty and not nearly as bad as the ones back home, plus the trains seem much faster. Also I have noticed that Denmark is very green which is cool. They don't have much trash, they use wind mills in the Baltic Sea for energy. Also their toilets have different buttons (I guess) for whatever business you do in the toilet to conserve water when you flush.
3. During the long plane ride over, a baby sitting in front of us started screaming and crying while everyone was asleep, so I was pretty tired when we arrived, which wasn't a great start. Some negative things I noticed was that in some places/restaurants, you had to pay for water where in the US it's usually free and there are places where you had to pay for the bathroom. A kind of negative observation could be that the danes are very laid back and usually in no rush until it's time to catch the public transportation, then they rush a lot. Also my partner takes a long time in the bathroom at home which sucks when you have to pee. Also, there aren't a lot of napkins, like they aren't at meals, which can be annoying. I have not had any experiences that I have found difficult or unpleasant. Some things such as plans can be confusing but never unpleasant. Also black licorice is gross but it's pretty popular here.
4. This trip has been my first trip to Europe, my longest flight, the longest I've been away from my family and the farthest I have ever been from home, and I've loved every second of it. Despite the bumpy start involving a crying baby on the ride over, the beginning of this trip went by seamlessly. We visited Sweden and I got to visit my very first castle and stand in a building older than my country. I stayed with my partner's mom and sister for the first couple of days then, because her parents are divorced, went to stay at her dad's. During the middle of the week some tension grew but I think it only came from mis-communications and being with the same people for a long time. I spent most of my time with my dane, my best friend and her dane. The biggest ordeal we faced was over the frustration of what we were doing. Whether it followed the plan or was what was wanted. But once things were sorted out, we always ended up having a good time. I miss cereal. Oddly enough that was one thought I had in regards to food on this trip. There was a lot of hard bread, especially for sandwiches and they enjoy curry sauce. I have discovered I am a fan of neither, especially when they are

combined !! I did enjoy the gieffla though but who doesn't. I tried as much as I could at meals, including lettuce on pizza and I am glad I did even if I didn't love it.

Luke

1. It honestly doesn't feel as different as I expected at first glance. I was nervous rolling up to the school, but it is awesome seeing everyone. The school is beautiful, and is much more modern and clean than west is, we are out catching up as if no time has passed. I forgot these people had become my friends and were more than exchange partners. I'm looking forward to these next days.
2. The best part of the exchange, other than the people for me, was being thrown into a whole new and different style of living that created a different style. I was just thrust into a life/place I didn't know, and though I was still a foreigner, I wasn't a tourist because how much I got to understand Nicolas + his family's way of living. The country was beautiful and amazing to be in, I loved the laid back zero scheduling nature of it. I got a break from school but learned so many valuable life lessons/experiences.
3. I had next to no issues while in Denmark. The only ones I can think would be in social mannerism differences, but I adjusted and got over it. They never let the americans talk in private, which was hard because they had a whole different language to communicate in, and we couldn't even whisper without being crept in on. Danes also acted as know it alls, but these were things that bothered me more in the states than it did while in Denmark.
4. Now that I am home from Denmark I can say it was one of the best experiences in my eighteen years of being alive. The memories and friendships I have made will last a long while but these experiences are going to help forever. I have been so used to the american way of life I had in a way grown ignorant to the fact that people live different kinds of lives. Both lifestyles had so many differences but so many similarities. Like, I found it fascinating living under a socialist leaning country, seeing and living out the stability it provides but also seeing the monarchy aspects in that though they have a Queen she is just a symbol. I can't get over the beauty of the country and how they have balanced the modern and historic elements but also how clean and eco-friendly they are as a country. I could go on for a while about how refreshing this trip was and am so glad I seized ahold and got this opportunity.

Megan

1. In Danishland, I am excited to see my partner and see all my friends again. But, in Denmark people are not as friendly as they are in the U.S. They do not always say please, thank you, etc. They do not seem to be as accomodating to us as we were to them which makes me upset because we were. Going in I was very nervous but I am starting to feel more at home. Sometimes they like to be group together all the time when I want to be with my other friends. I loved the cities we went to for they were beautiful and old.
2. -going to Sweden, Copenhagen, -eating new foods, -hanging w/friends
3. -being hungry, -tired/exhausting, -off of schedule, -Danes are unprepared
4. Highlights: This exchange brought me more than just a trip across the ocean, but it gave me a lifelong friend. Though that is what I mainly took out of this trip, there were many other peaks that I had experienced. Such as... -Tivoli, -Copenhagen, -Malmo, -Kronberg Castle, etc. living actually in the culture instead of just in a hotel was also a big factor of this trip. I was thrown into a culture that I was not used to and it turned out more amazing than I could have hoped. The food was so good let me tell you!

Lowlights: Time difference from here to home, waking up early for school. Language barrier, missing family, constantly hearing voices that I had no clue what they meant, the danes were not prepared a lot as well but I realized that is mainly part of ther culture.

Melissa

1. –don't say thank you as much/any manners really, -wing everything, don't have set schedules, -do what they want, -don't accommodate as much, -love all the windows +simplicity, -public transportation, -relaxed/do whatever, -actually have a lot of trash on roads/side of roads, -wasnt that jetlagged
2. –family is so nice + accomadates to whatever I want to do, -I love copenhagen + underestimated it very much
3. –very tired, -not having a structured schedule, -only drink tap water @ home
4. I think in my case, this trip wasn't what I expected. I wasn't close w/my partner at all. Therefore this trip and exchange made me extremely close with other danes. I built long lasting friendships from just hanging out for two weeks. We have already talked about future plans to meet up and I think that's crazy after just 2 weeks. Unfortunately I wasn't close with my dane but it helped me realize cultural differences. We grew up different and she was extremely quiet and reserved, opposite of me. You have to respect differences.

Michelle

1. To be fair, I've been to Denmark before, so I had already seen Copenhagen. But I still love the architecture, which is so different from home. People are more reserved here, whereas back home you expect to talk to the stranger on the street. But for me, I feel that extreme wanderlust feeling being satisfied, just breathing it in. I love being able to get to know Nanna and her family, and hear and experience their take on their home country. The only negative feeling is in sharing different political opinions. Most of mine align w/ the counrty's, but I haven't really shared my opposing views as strongly. But overall, I love Denmark and it's so different from visiting and staying @ a hotel. I love this so far.
2. Nanna had been pretty adaptive to what I've wanted to do and see. Using public transportation has been easy, minus the strike (haha), but it's fun to just hop on the train with friends. It's also cool to hear the Danes speak their native language, and effortlessly switch over to English. I especially appreciate that my partner then explains what they are saying so I'm out of the loop.
3. It's been difficult to adjust to the time difference, and catch up on sleep. When hanging out w/ a larger group it is also harder to make decisions. Other than that, there hasn't really been many issues for me personally. I feel like it's more figuring out how to work together with someone other than anything else. Maybe talking about politics sometimes? But nothing too bad.
4. I went to Denmark with the expectation that I would be ahead of the rest of our group. Just in the mindset that I'm already so well traveled and had been there before, I guess maybe boosted my ego. And other than being able to relate to some things I had already experienced, I feel like my assumption was so wrong. I'm kind of glad to be knocked back into my place. When I was there, my entitledness of my opinions that the USA generated about "work hard to get the dream" was scaled back. At the school, even though I didn't appreciate the slight bias in teaching, learning about the system of gov't and taxes made me question our own. And at home with my partner's family, I found myself both learning and

teaching both those previous subjects, and about culture and history. Yes, staying with one group of people for 10 days straight can be tiring, but I appreciated it more knowing we'd have to leave. Going on the exchange changed my life. It's the combination of making a new friend and learning that across the ocean, we're still so similar, and yet different, that an unbreakable bond is formed.*A major difference in visiting in a hotel like I did over the summer, verses the exchange is that I felt like I was soaking in the lifestyle more and the values. I know hygge was a thing before the exchange, but it was not until we were sitting laughing with our partners that I FELT the hygge. There was one night Nanna and I stayed up talking and eating chocolate, and it was this fun unexplainable home + coziness to it that hygge describes perfectly. Or on the pier in Nyhaven eating ice cream. I felt like since I was essentially happily forced to take part, I did all the way. I'm very opinionated, and honestly I'll accidentally say something biased and not really think the opposing side had a good argument. This exchange showed me that the otherside can be just as good if not slightly better. I was also very mindful while we were there, and tried to live in the moment. There were times I was uncomfortable, like during the class when discussing economics and taxes and politics. I think it was because I felt a preconceived bias against my opinions and the USA by the teacher and possibly the students. But who is to say they didn't feel the same way over here? We went to into Denmark w/ set ideas thinking that they may change, but I honestly didn't expect to challenge my thoughts so much as to be undecided still on who is "right". There is no one way to act either, and nothing is "weird" just "different" and I caught myself multiple times going back and correcting something I said, or even correcting my thoughts and mindset. Even the world traveler had some struggles haha. Honestly, my only real issues didn't really come from anything past my own fault of not giving Nanna a better idea of what I wanted to do in Sweden until the night before. Other than that, I feel like everything was positive, and even if it was challenging in the moment, I learned from it and appreciate the experience.

Stephanie

1. I love the city. Both Copenhagen + Sweden are so much cleaner and more beautiful than Philadelphia. I expected the meals to be smaller, but they serve a lot of different foods for one meal. Also, they don't cook the oatmeal, they make it with milk like you would with cereal. Also theres no people sitting on the street begging. Everyday they all dress, in nice clothing for school, both boys + girls, but in America students usually wear sweats or even pjs.
2. Pretty much everything. They have a lot more vegan options so I enjoy going out. I also love sitting at each meal for an hour and just having conversation with my host parents.
3. Yesterday in Sweden no one really made solid plans and there was a lot of time wasted just wandering around with no purpose + then when we went to the mall and we weren't even there for an hour before the group decided to leave.
4. I feel like the most significant part of this experience was having to learn how to communicate with people whether or not you are friends. Unfortunately, my partner and I did not form a close bond like I've seen with a lot of my friends and their partners. I really struggled holding a conversation with them, especially in America, which made me discouraged to start a new one. When I was in Denmark I sort of felt like we were still strangers and not quite comfortable with each other. I realized I needed to learn how to have a conversation with him or else I would be miserable the whole week not making plans and

feeling uncomfortable living there. Throughout the week we never became close, but it was more because our personalities don't click and there felt like there was a slight barrier because of that, but we were at least able to have actual conversations and make plans to go out and do stuff. I think a positive aspect was that now I get to go home with a lot more friends that I wouldn't have made any other way.

Susie

1. I have had an amazing first weekend in Denmark. My host parents are so friendly and welcoming. Copenhagen is very clean and less industrial in comparison to US cities. Spending time with the Danes is very similar to spending time with my American friends. They like activities and other similar things. I have noticed they eat a lot. Eating is like the activity for the day and it is lots of bread and fish. Their houses are smaller, but make everything is so beautiful and simple. Their roads are narrower with no stop signs, speed bumps, and they have posts in the middle of the roads to make people go slower. Overall it has been great.
2. -visiting Copenhagen, -eating dinner as a family, -shopping, -getting ready, -food, -chill school, -funny parents
3. -I am going to get chunky after eating so much, -I like alone time and sometimes I can't be alone
4. I have found a new lifelong friend that I know I will see again. This experience has been eye opening to see another culture. I know now that I appreciate the little things in both my life and hers. Experiencing a new home has demonstrated the complex lives others live everyday to me. Seeing new places and tasting new foods has been wonderful, but now I am ready to go home and sleep in my own bed and drive my own car.